WHAT'S WRONG WITH POLICY ANALYSIS
THE FANTASIES OF A SENATOR'S WIFE
WHY CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT FAILS

The Washington Monthly

SEPTEMBER 1979/$2.00

Why

David Brinkley
John Chancellor
Walter Cronkite
Roger Mudd
Barbara Walters
Frank Reynolds

Should Cancel Their Subscriptions To The New York Times

—James David Barber on The Future of TV News

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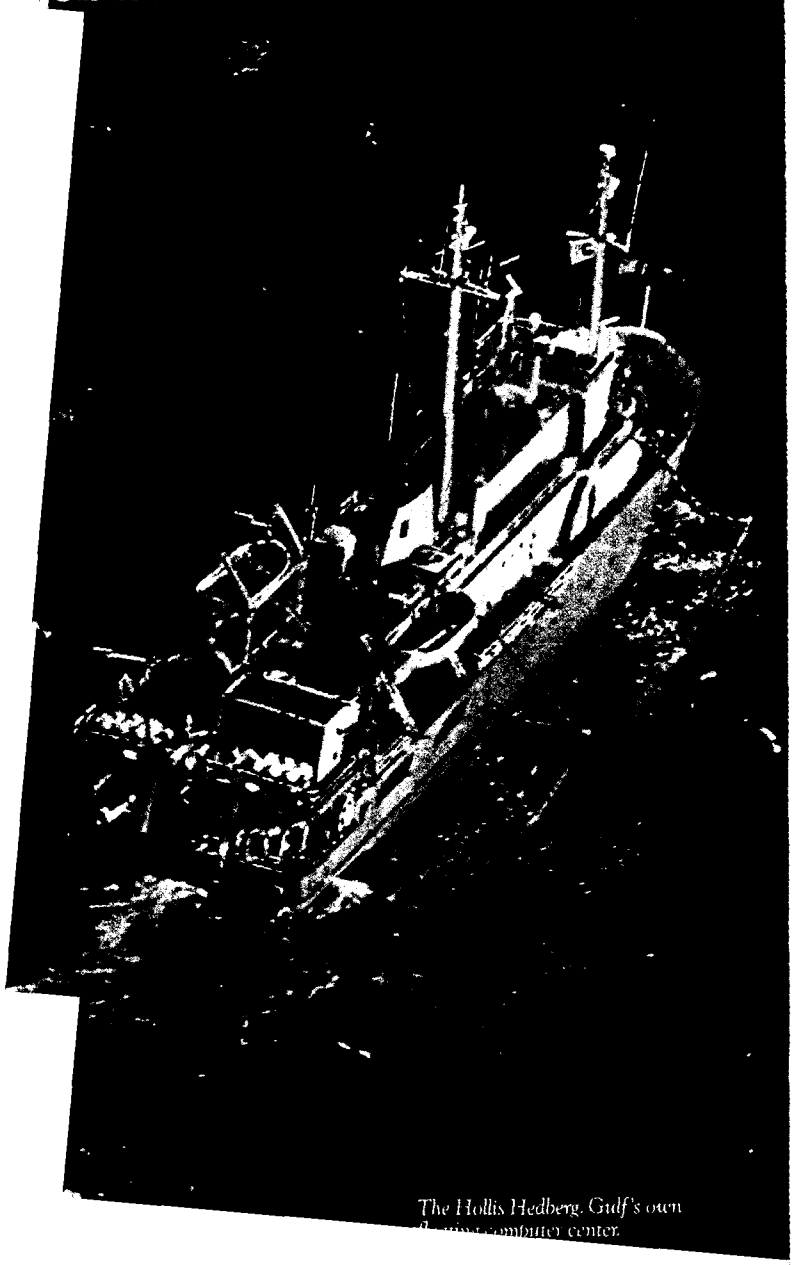

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Gulf

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Letters

Red-Baiting

A rather nasty sign of the times awaited me as I read through Nicholas Lemann's article on Paul Warnke's departure from ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency]. To see the question (put to Warnke in his confirmation hearings) "Do you know Daniel Ellsberg?" characterized matter-of-factly in *The Washington Monthly* as "a Red-baiting question," struck me as a measure of casual Red-baiting that I do not recall encountering in two years of prosecution and attacks by the Nixon administration.

DANIEL ELLSBERG
Kensington, California

Devil's Advocate

I was impressed with your story ["Death of the Devil's Advocate"] in the July/August edition of *The Washington Monthly*.

But, alas, you committed a puzzling error, given the research you must have done to construct the story. You described Charles Duncan as "Assistant Secretary of Defense." Not so. He is *the* Deputy Secretary of Defense, the number two man in the Pentagon. There is a covey of assistant secretaries, but only one Deputy.

JACK VALENTI
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Valenti is president of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. [Charles Duncan has since been nominated to be Secretary of Energy.]

Bay of Pigs

Your review of my book, *Bay of Pigs—The Untold Story*, attributed my disclosure of a large volume of crucial new information primarily to the "wondrous effect of the Freedom of Information Act."

That's not the way it was. My book was all but finished when—after two and a half years of infuriating red tape and relentless followups—I received the only major document disgorged by the bureaucracy: the so-called Taylor Report summarizing the investigation ordered by President Kennedy. It was useful but, even though it is rubber-stamped "ultra-sensitive," a classification I'd never seen, it added little to what I'd already gotten from eyewitnesses by conventional use of the conventional weapon: shoe leather.

The low value of available classified documents, at least in untangling the 17-year-old labyrinth of coverups on the Bay of Pigs, has interesting reasons: (1) A lot of sensitive data was never put on paper; when Kennedy finally got around to asking the Joint Chiefs of Staff to evaluate the plan, for example, the chiefs' emissaries got nothing from the CIA except a verbal briefing during which they had to scribble hasty notes; (2) A lot of sensitive documents were destroyed, especially those demonstrating spectacularly greater U.S. *military* participation than has ever been disclosed to date; I talked to the general who was ordered by Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to put key documents into his shredder, and to a U.S. Navy carrier captain who pitched his logs into his ship's incinerator; (3) The climactic event of the Bay of Pigs was so secret that General Maxwell D. Taylor, author of the "ultra-sensitive" Taylor Report, never heard of it and therefore couldn't investigate or report on it.

I refer to the shelling of two U.S. destroyers, 2,000 yards off the Cuban coast, by Castro tanks on the last day of the battle. I got eyewitness accounts from the American and the Castro commanders responsible at the scene. The American commodore, Robert R. Crutchfield, was—understandably—urged by his officers to return the fire. He came within a hairbreadth of returning it. That action would have been perfectly defensible. It was an eyeball-to-eyeball situation potentially as dangerous as the missile crisis a year later. Crutchfield's calm and good sense prevailed. Both he and the Castro commanders were fully aware that they might have ignited World War III. Crutchfield was brought into the Taylor Committee's hearing room by his superiors when the Navy participation was investigated. Yet he was not asked one question. So there *is* no document.

PETER H. WYDEN
Ridgefield, Conn.

Sunset Laws

An article by Barry Mitzman in the June issue of *The Washington Monthly* concluded that Sunset laws in the states

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weren't working. That analysis seemed to suggest that Sunset is effective only when programs are terminated—when agencies go out of business. As a device to be used to dismantle government, Sunset admittedly has fallen short of the mark.

An analysis of Sunset which goes beyond this simple bodycount mentality, however. . . reveals that important changes *have* been made as a result of Sunset evaluations. In a number of states, for example, public members who represent consumers—not just special interests—have been added to many occupational and professional licensing boards. Other state legislatures have enacted strict codes of ethics designed to ensure that the public interest, rather than private interests, are served. Restrictions on advertising—which keep consumers from learning where they can receive the least expensive professional services—have been prohibited. Arbitrary requirements which have prevented qualified individuals from entering professions have been lifted. We have seen a reduction in unnecessary regulation and better enforcement of those regulations which remain.

Of course, Sunset is not a perfect process. In some cases, legislatures have tried to take on too much too quickly, making effective review impossible. In other states, the initial scope of the Sunset process has been too restrictive. Such difficulties should not be surprising in the implementation of a major new change. On balance, I believe that Sunset, in the words of Colorado public affairs professor Michael S. March, has "produced results far beyond the expectations of many critics.". . .

DAVID COHEN
Washington, D.C.

David Cohen is president of Common Cause.

'A Letter to Jimmy Carter'

Please cancel my subscription.

Too bad; you were doing fairly well for a while.

I hope the dinner was worth it.

ADAM WALINSKY
New York, N.Y.

Adam Walinsky is a New York lawyer who was on the staff of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. (See "Tilting at Windmills" *for the editor's reply.)*

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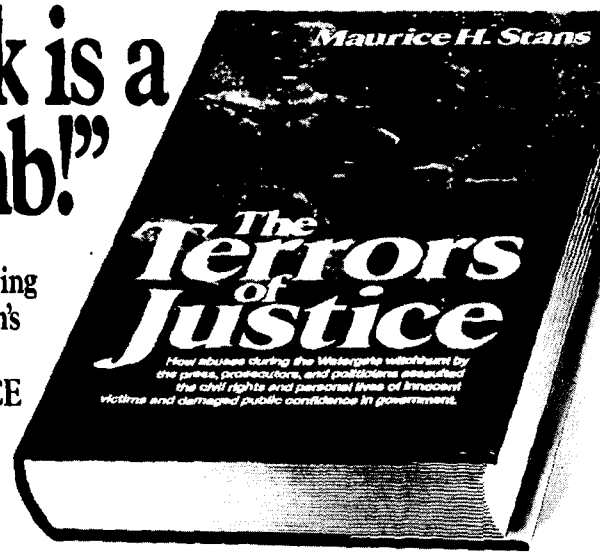

To find out why, read the following excerpts from William F. Gavin's review of Maurice Stans' THE TERRORS OF JUSTICE in Human Events....

"Someday, perhaps five or ten years from now, a brilliant, iconoclastic graduate student in American history is going to come across Maurice Stans' *The Terrors of Justice* in the library stacks. Curious, since his professors have never mentioned the book, he will take it out of the library and return to his room. There, throughout the night, he will read it, fascinated, appalled by what he is reading, incredulous.

"As dawn approaches, he will put the book aside and think: If this book is correct or even anywhere near correct, then the official version of Watergate we have been taught in high school and college is not only incorrect and incomplete—it is a monstrous, unconscionable distortion of the truth...

"Until now all we have had as source material for Watergate have been polemics, diatribes, confessions, self-congratulatory memoirs of those who prosecuted the Watergate figures, Hollywood good-guy vs. bad-guy extravaganzas in the movies and on television, and born-again reflections on former Nixon aides...

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"His story reads as if *Les Miserables,* with its tale of prosecutorial zeal gone berserk, was retold by Kafka. It is a modern horror story, all the more gripping because it could happen to anyone, any time the media and the liberals decide that the usual rules of fair play should no longer apply...

"Stans attempts to give, in specific and at times excruciating detail the 'other side' of the Watergate story...and the sordid and all but incredible perversions of our system of justice by public officials.

"This is a book to buy and keep and when the time is right, to give to one's children...[It] may or may not say anything new about Richard Nixon or the other Watergate figures we know so much about. But it will tell of a *reign of media and government terror unparalleled in American history,* shamefully ignored by those who are self-proclaimed lovers and defenders of civil liberties...

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"We are determined to give meaning to the concept of equal employment opportunity, and in so doing to make our own small contribution to the development of a just society in South Africa."

Mr. H. F. Oppenheimer

Highlights from the statement of the Chairman, Mr. H. F. Oppenheimer

SOUTH AFRICA's own sound financial position has a very serious counterpart in the form of excess productive capacity and massive unemployment. The number of unemployed blacks is now estimated to be not less than 800,000 and may be substantially higher. Hence it is of vital importance that our favourable balance of payments is handled in such a way that it brings about greater investment and production and does not find expression merely in inflation or increased gold and monetary reserves. The last budget and the progressive implementation of the innovative and far-reaching recommendations of the De Kock report are important steps in the right direction. However, in the absence of an inflow of long-term capital from overseas, the authorities remain cautious. While this is understandable, such caution to my mind may have consequences more damaging than boldness at the present time.

The Work Force

WHAT IS REQUIRED is greater confidence, internally and externally, in the economic and particularly the political future of South Africa. It is impossible to deal with the problem of unemployment on a basis that is socially and politically acceptable without investment on a massive scale and a great increase in the skilled labour force. In the medium and, a fortiori, in the long term the country's need for skilled labour can only be met by training large numbers of black workers and their absorption into industry on a stabilised basis. In the short term it is also important to encourage the immigration of skilled men, because they are a necessary factor in tackling the problem of black unemployment. However, anxieties about the country's political future have inhibited the inflow of skilled men just as they have inhibited the inflow of investment capital.

A more concerted, and certainly more imaginative, effort should be made to increase employment in the black homelands, by encouraging the growth of labour-intensive industries and the cultivation, on land that currently yields little or no commercial return, of crops from which liquid fuels can now be economically produced. In South Africa as a whole, however, the trend towards capital-intensive industry is natural at this stage in our development and cannot be reversed. While economic arguments can possibly be developed in favour of delaying this process by the maintenance of a comparatively low wage structure, it is quite impossible today to envisage either a serious reduction in the standard of living of white workers or the indefinite continuation of an outmoded system of racial discrimination under which black earnings are kept disproportionately low compared to those of whites. The fact is that we cannot hope to

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solve the basic problems of the country socially and economically unless we can find the means to realise the country's undoubted potential for rapid growth.

Government Policy

IT IS ENTIRELY fitting, therefore, that the thrust of Government policy, as exemplified by its response to the De Kock report and by the budget, is now on the need to promote growth in the advanced sector of the economy through greater reliance on the market mechanism and private initiative. Nonetheless the subsistence sector, which is largely synonymous with the rural homelands, must not be neglected and in this respect the situation is complicated by the policy of granting full independence to those homelands that are willing to accept it. This should not and must not be interpreted to mean that the central government and private industry are entitled to divest themselves of their own responsibility and concern for development in the homelands, particularly in agriculture.

The shift in economic strategy, and the conflict it creates in National Party policy, are epitomised in the Government's response to the Wiehahn commission's enquiry into South Africa's labour relations, and the Riekert commission's examination of the laws and regulations which control the movement and employment particularly of urban black workers. The Government has accepted these reports in principle but is not prepared at this stage to legislate in respect of certain key recommendations nor to commit itself to a time scale in regard to the proposals as a whole. Thus the legislation that has been enacted is inadequate, and a disappointment to many of us. It must be taken into account however that the reports propose changes which, unexceptionable though they may be elsewhere, are radical in the South African context and that the Government itself appears to regard its response to them as incomplete and only a beginning. The De Kock, Wiehahn and Riekert reports, together with the Government's initiatives in the political sphere, may mark the beginning of new and more realistic policies on which it may be hoped that a stable and peaceful future for the country could be built. Certainly the Government has created great expectations both at home and abroad which if not fulfilled might have serious results. Time, however, is needed to carry through the new policies and whether that is accorded us will depend to a large extent on factors we cannot control, particularly the policies of the Western democracies.

In this regard it does seem to me just possible that the oil crisis as well as the disorder and violence in many parts of the African continent, which is such a large supplier of essential raw materials to the Western powers, might suggest that the need for civil and economic stability, together with a policy of gradualism even when it comes to righting long-standing injustices, cannot always safely be neglected because of excessive pre-occupation with the understandable political ambitions and emotions of many of the newly independent states. South Africa's present policies in relation to Zimbabwe Rhodesia and South West Africa/Namibia, as well as internally, surely deserve careful consideration by our friends overseas. It would be a tragedy not only for South Africa but for the world if those policies were not given the time, together with the essential measure of goodwill, to evolve and develop further.

Employment Practices

THE CORPORATION acknowledges the need to establish special programmes for black employees who have the potential for job advancement, in recognition of the various obstacles that stand in their way. One of the programmes being undertaken is a scheme, ambitious in concept and likely to be difficult of execution, to recruit, educate, train and develop high-quality black matriculants who will form a pool of potential managers in the financial and engineering fields which are at the heart of our business. Known as the undergraduate cadet scheme, it has been made possible by the co-operation of the University of the Witwatersrand. It is financed jointly by the Corporation and DeBeers, and we estimate that it will cost rather more than R3 million over the next five years. We look upon this as an investment in the widest sense, for once the scheme has proved itself it will be made available to other employers and educational institutions in the country.

We are looking forward to employing blacks for careers in the significant decision making areas of our business. We are determined to give meaning to the concept of equal employment opportunity, and in so doing to make our own small contribution to the development of a just society in South Africa.

The full text of Mr. Oppenheimer's statement is available. Write to:

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Tilting at Windmills

You know how I would have cracked the Rosenberg case? Not with the threat of electrocution, but with the offer of a book contract. Nothing in recent history has been so effective in getting people to talk. Instead of more prosecutors, we need more publishers and literary agents. . . . Richard Freeman, a United States District Court judge in Atlanta, has struck a blow against exorbitant legal fees, reducing a request by attorneys in an anti-trust suit from the $300 per hour requested by the lawyers to less than $80 per hour. Freeman found that the lawyers had devoted more time and energy to justifying their fees than to representing their clients. The judge contrasted a 21-page memorandum, which the lawyers had filed on behalf of their clients, with one of 200 pages "neatly bound and carefully indexed" in support of the lawyers' petition for fees. . . . Why at the end of World War II didn't we take land from Germany, from its loveliest and least damaged areas, and make it into the homeland for the Jews, instead of assisting in the taking of land from the Arabs, whose crimes towards the Jews were tiny compared to those of the Germans? . . .

I am not disturbed by all the firing. Carter may have been wrong in the way he went about it, but isn't that what they always say at the office? "Of course [insert name of boss] had the right to fire [insert name of employee], but we were outraged by how he did it."

Washington—the permanent government, the civil servants, the congressmen, the journalists, the corporate lobbyists—is a community dedicated to the proposition that firing is evil. Through civil service rules, incumbent protection acts, newspaper guild contracts, and the informal tenure that has become customary in our great corporations, most of our rulers have insulated themselves from the price the rest of us must pay for failing to perform.

For the same reason that I do not regret the firing, I mourn the disappearance of the long lines at Washington's gasoline stations. During the two months or so of their existence, there was a sense of urgency in the town for the first time in years. The reason is that most of our leaders had to wait in line just like everyone else. Ordinarily, of course, our leaders are insulated not only from firing but from most of the other realities that torment the rest of us. Generous health insurance plans spare them from the pain of medical bills. As for inflation, official salaries have kept pace with it—indeed in many cases they have more than kept pace—as have the salaries of our unofficial rulers in the lobbies and the press. . . .

When civil service employees tell you that they won't be able to stay even with inflation if they get only the 5.5-percent salary increase now planned for October 1, there are two points you may want to make in response. First,

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that all the salary increases civil servants have received since 1962 have kept them well ahead of inflation since that time—indeed those increases have been a not insignificant factor in producing that inflation. Second, in addition to the annual October raises, 99 per cent of federal employees—and many in state and local government—have been receiving annual merit increases. Suppose you had gone to work for the federal government at $35,000 a year in September 1977. With no promotions, with just the combined annual merit and cost-of-living-raises, you would be making $42,000 now and looking forward to—I mean complaining about—another 5.5-percent increase next month.

You may recall our account of Carter's 1977 Christmas party for the White House staff, which was notable for the absence of food and drink, not even a coke or a potato chip. Now we know why. Of his $50,000 expense allowance for 1977, Carter spent only $1,108.52. He pocketed the rest.... Another update: In September 1977, we reported that the Cape May Ferry had signs at every stairway saying "Life Boats This Way." The signs led the faithful to two lifeboats with a capacity of 25 people each. The ferry has a capacity of 700 people. I sent a copy of the article to the Coast Guard, which had certified the ferry as safe. There have been some changes made, in fact. The lifeboats still hold only 50 people. The ferry's capacity is still 700. But all those signs have been blocked out.... If you want to understand the survival knack of Robert Strauss, you may be helped by this comment he made to a breakfast meeting of reporters during the recent tenseness: "Helen and I were talking over drinks. If there's one person in the country we'd pick as a son it's Hamilton Jordan."...

It will be years before the full extent of the disaster called the Department of Energy becomes known. The tip that may provide a clue to the dimensions of the iceberg is a report from Ken Mansfield, the department's inspector general, that it takes 2.25 days for correctly addressed inter-office mail to get from one to another of the department's seven buildings in Washington and that the Washington headquarters loses 126,000 pieces of mail per year.... Of course, even if Schlesinger had been Peter Drucker, there is the question of just how much time he would have had to overcome the chaos in between his appearances before the 24 congressional subcommittees and the 11 full committees that oversee the various functions of DOE. If you have not been through the experience of appearing before these committees, it is hard to imagine how totally exhausting it can be and how many hours can be spent in preparation for it. This is the kind of situation that the Congress cannot be expected to change itself because its committee chairmen have too great a stake in keeping things as they are.... Speaking of management, another agency suffering from a lack thereof is, of all places, the Office of Management and Budget, which the Carter administration has used primarily to analyze and control spending, but not to manage the rest of the government. In fact, the saddest part of those ridiculous evaluation forms passed out by Hamilton Jordan is that they prove the White House did not already know what its sub-cabinet level administrators were doing. That information should have been systematically relayed back to the White House through the OMB. It also should, of course, have come from a network of gossip and informal evaluation run by the White House staff. What on earth has Jordan been doing with his time if he's just now finding out about key people in the government?... I am constantly assured that Jordan is a prince among men—a really good, thoughtful man—by everyone I know who knows Jordan. James Fallows, for example, who can be withering in his comments on some of his former colleagues, has nothing but praise for Jordan. But the only skill

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Jordan has clearly demonstrated since the 1976 election is the ability he and Jody Powell share to keep anyone else from getting close to the President.

More food for second thoughts on decontrol. The SEC's decontrol of brokerage rates has led to much higher brokerage fees for small investors, much lower fees for big institutional investors, and forced hundreds of brokerage firms out of business.... *Two stories about Amtrak:* One in *The Washington Star* tells of conductors on the Crescent who repeatedly denied that there was a berth available for a person who was elderly, ill, and willing to pay, simply because they didn't want to go to the trouble of writing the ticket. The other, from *The New York Times*, tells of a New York stationmaster and someone at Amtrak's operation center in Washington who, when confronted at 10 p.m. one night with a crowd of passengers from a cancelled Eastern Airlines shuttle, had the wit to extend the run of the 10 p.m. Philadelphia train to Washington. I hope I will be proved wrong, but the way things usually work, the Crescent conductors will go unpunished and the shuttle-rescuers unrewarded....

In his article in this issue, Leonard Reed mentions training programs as one of the devices used to occupy the time of our GS-15s. The need for something to fill the day must be growing exponentially, for, since 1958, the government's training budget has soared from $1 million to $1.1 *billion. The Washington Post* recently cited one example of where this money goes: the Department of Agriculture is paying $225 a day to send its employees to female assertiveness training.... Another work-making device explored by Reed is the in-box. The in-box has now assumed such importance in the government that in the State Department's examination for Foreign Service officers, applicants are given a hypothetical in-box and asked to "prioritize" the contents....

A friend of mine who once practiced law with one of the large Washington firms told me a revealing anecdote the other day. It seems that a major corporate client came to his firm with an anti-trust problem. The firm's advice was that the problem was hopeless in the sense that the client was ultimately doomed to lose. But the case could be stretched out for as long as ten years. Would the client be prepared to pay the $500,000 to $1,000,000 in annual legal fees that delay would require? Of course. Here is a client who knows he's wrong and whose law firm knows he's wrong. Yet they are both willing to make the government spend millions over ten years to win a case that they know it deserves to win now. This may be bad for the government and for the public, but what about the five to ten million dollars it will cost the company? Won't that hurt it? Hardly—legal fees, remember, are deductible.... Speaking of delay, there is a merger between American Electric Power Company and Southern Ohio Electric Company that has been pending before the SEC for eleven years....

If you share my anxieties about flying in small planes, here's a tip from the National Transportation Safety Board: the Cessna 150 and the Piper PA-28 accounted "for almost half of the mid-air collisions" of the planes studied between 1972 and 1976. But the most important advice is to take a good look at the guy in the cockpit. The study found that pilot error is involved in 90 per cent of the fatal crashes of private planes.

The defense in a recent murder case in Montgomery County, Maryland, argued that its client should be found not guilty because of insanity. Doctors pointed out that while the defendant had been like other children in having imaginary companions, his were Hitler and Mussolini. The doctors also mentioned that the defendant had once placed his pet cat in a container of

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battery acid and believed that "the world is full of people wanting to pull the trigger." One wants to take an enlightened view of these matters, but I must say that in the event the defense prevails, I hope, for the sake of the rest of us, that there are bars on the windows of whatever facility for the mentally disturbed the accused is sent to. . . . And I hope it is not overcrowded. Prison overcrowding is becoming, like insanity, another way for the guilty to escape. Take the case of a Maryland man with a long arrest record, who was convicted last month of raping a 14-year-old girl just six days after he had been released from a prison where he had been serving a ten-year sentence for kidnapping. He was not released because he was deemed ready for parole, but because a judge had decided Maryland prisons were overcrowded. The James J. Kilpatricks and Patrick Buchanans will have a field day with this one, and I will agree with them.

In fact, it seems to me that when it comes to putting repeat offenders back on the street, society's policy should be one of maximum feasible delay. A recent study by the Institute for Law and Social Research found that prisoners who have been arrested for burglary, robbery, and larceny have a 60 per cent chance of being arrested again for those or other crimes. About one fourth of the 11,052 arrests studied involved only seven per cent of the defendants.

Sidney Rittenberg, the American who has lived in China for over 35 years, recently wrote about how his native land looked on his return. In case you missed it in the *Times*, here is an excerpt:

"Why should a country, where production and educational opportunity continue to expand, show signs of terminal decay, like pernicious inflation and rising rates of crime, mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, divorce, suicides?

"With our boundless energy resources and the world's most advanced electronics and statistics why is it so hard to nail down the causes and the solution—or even the extent—of the energy crisis?

"Why is it that there are so many more open-minded, unbigoted people today, but the broad minds often find themselves unable or unwilling to zero in on a practical problem?

"Why are there so many people who have everything—except for that overriding joy of living, of building, of creating, of belonging, of being wanted, of fulfillment that you find in so many Chinese who have very damn little?". . .

A study by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress shows that productivity increases in the federal government have lagged 25 per cent behind the private sector for the past ten years. That's like saying someone is slower than a turtle, since the rate of increase in private sector productivity was only 1.7 per cent in the last four years and has now turned into a *decrease*. . . .

One way the government has continued to play its proud role in the productivity story is through its purchase of word-processing (WP) systems. WP is now costing the government $80 million a year, ranging from $5,000 for electronic typewriters to $200,000 for shared-logic, minicomputer-based text-editing systems. The General Accounting Office has found that "most agencies can neither demonstrate that they have increased their productivity or that their word processing systems are in fact cost effective." The Commerce Department, for example, spent $900,000 in one year for the rental of automatic typewriters but "no bureau had reduced staff by their use.". . . I continue to worry about all the nice ladies who think they have to go to law school. I offer them this letter from Joan Miller of Sacramento, California:

"Reading law makes me crave poetry. Materialistic young law students make me long for old do-gooders. And every time I open those poorly edited, carelessly designed legal

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textbooks, I wonder what I'm doing with my precious late years."

Do you sometimes suspect that your property assessments are not the result of the fairest or the most carefully considered procedures? Well, those of us who live in the District of Columbia and share your suspicion had it confirmed this year by Matthew S. Watson, the city auditor, who reported that city assessors "make visual assessments by standing in front of the property. They only enter about 15 per cent of the buildings each year." Anyway, now you know why your neighbor with the gold-plated bathroom pays no more than you with your leaky chromium. . . . The Comptroller General has for years tried to get the military to use civilian employees wherever feasible. Support him by writing a letter to your congressman. His case is simple. An E-6 enlisted man gets a base pay of $14,125, but his other benefits bring his total cost to $23,320. The equivalent civilian GS-7 gets similar base pay, $14,713, but his fringe benefits bring his total cost to only $18,302. So you save $5,018 by hiring the civilian GS-7. . . .

Here is an excerpt from an editorial in my favorite newspaper, the *Charleston Gazette,* about the decline in quality of American workmanship:

"In a recent issue of *Consumer Reports,* the respected publication of Consumers Union, the subtle insertion of 'of course' in a comparison of automobiles amounted to a powerful editorial on the subject. The Volkswagen, of course, was delivered with far fewer defects, the magazine said.

"The inference to be drawn from this meaningful 'of course' was that an American built car was not expected to be as free of factory defects as a foreign car is expected to be.

"It is true that since the invention of the wheel man has declared that 'they don't make things the way they used to.' But *Consumer Reports* does not compare cars of today and cars of yesterday. It compares American and foreign cars.

"It would be nice to expect the excellence of hand craftmanship from an assembly line, whether in America, Germany, or Japan. But it is not unreasonable to ask why an American assembly line product should suffer by comparison with a foreign assembly line product."

I agree. But I'd like to point out to my friends at the *Gazette* that not all Volkswagens are made in Germany. The VW plant in New Stanton, Pennsylvania has been turning out Rabbits for over a year now, and according to *Car and Driver* magazine the "U.S.-built car. . . seems to be the equal of the German original in almost every respect." How did VW do it? Well, they started with a small plant and an eager workforce. Still, they had to overcome their "early experiences with American suppliers, many of which weren't used to meeting production tolerances as tight as Volkswagen's." But "after a number of prototype pieces were shipped back and forth from supplier to VW to supplier, the suppliers tightened up their quality control." The inescapable conclusion is that inexpensive, high quality American cars are quite possible—it's just that the three (really two) big U.S. manufacturers think the American buyer doen't care about quality, only that he gets enough cheesy velour to convince him, if he squints his eyes and doesn't twist any of the knobs too hard, that he's in a Cadillac. The theory seems to be that Americans have now been buying junk for so many years that they don't know the difference. But they do. Ford and GM didn't get the message back in 1960

NEXT MONTH:
PART 2—
"HOW THE PEOPLE LOST CONTROL"
by Robert M. Kaus
WHERE TO STAY IN WASHINGTON

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when the imports began creeping onto the highways, and they haven't gotten the message now that foreign makers have captured a record 22 per cent of our market. The only way the situation seems likely to improve is if a new domestic manufacturer comes along who, like VW, believes in quality. Any takers?

I think what Adam Walinsky is saying in his letter, printed on page 2, is that Carter used a White House dinner—I attended one in May—to bribe me into making this anti-Kennedy remark in my "Letter to Jimmy Carter" in our last issue: "Unlike Edward Kennedy, you do not get drunk, nor do you have to worry about explaining from whose bed you may be called at the moment of nuclear decision."

I was blunt because I hoped Senator Kennedy would read it and be shocked into the self-examination that so many of us who care for him believe is essential. I not only like Kennedy, I admire much of his public career. Indeed, this magazine once published an article about him that, after praising his performance in Congress, concluded, "What is good about him as a senator is more important than what is tragic about him as a man." But we also said:

"When we think of presidents, a different calculation must be made. One does not want to sound too pious about these things; Kennedy is hardly the only man of his generation to grow up thinking that, whenever you had a chance to get laid, you were a fool to pass it by. . . . What is significant is another set of clues, especially the drinking and the fast driving, which suggest a streak of self-destructive behavior. A senator with such a streak can finally harm only himself, but a president can harm many others.

"Maybe the streak is not permanent; maybe it has been exaggerated even now. Maybe in 1980 or 1984 its traces will have disappeared. But as long as it remains, it is the reason for worrying about his candidacy."

My best information is that its traces have not disappeared. And that is why I wrote what I did. For Walinsky's information, our earlier article on Kennedy was published three years before the President asked me to dinner.

There is one other thing that worries me about Senator Kennedy. It is that his liberalism is so conventional, without the occasional pinch of conservatism that gave bite and character to his brothers' political philosophy. He seems untroubled by things that worry me, Sidney Rittenberg, and the *Charleston Gazette,* like shoddy workmanship, declining productivity, and a meritocracy dedicated to "making it" and materialism. . . .

Probably no one takes more of a beating in these pages than the conventional liberals, but this month I want to pay tribute to some of them, to those in television and the movies who have, in my opinion, been primarily responsible for bringing about nothing less than a social revolution in the last 20 years. If they have not eradicated racial and religious prejudice, shows like "All in the Family" and "Good Times" have certainly brought about a radical reduction in the hatreds that used to run through our entire society.

They even helped me with my problem with the Germans. As one who grew up during World War II, I have found it difficult to feel warm affection for the Nazi bastards—I mean for the German people. But even I like Sergeant Schultz and at least understand Colonel Klink.

I was therefore surprised to see David Halberstam condemn "Hogan's Heroes" in his new book, *The Powers That Be*: "The immorality of the decision to put the program on the nation's airways was staggering." Yet what "Hogan's Heroes" did was exactly what Halberstam himself had done in his book about how our leaders had gotten us into Vietnam. In Klink the bureaucrat and in Schultz the lovable coward ("I see *nothing,* I hear *nothing*!"), we were shown how understandable human beings could serve the Nazi machine, just as the best and the brightest behaved like war criminals during Vietnam.

—*Charles Peters*

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Not *The New York Times:* What Network News Should Be

by James David Barber

The trouble with television news is that it is too good—too intellectual, too balanced. It passes right over the heads of the great "lower" half of the American electorate who need it most. If those who would reform television stopped thinking in terms of turning the network news into the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or *The New York Times,* it could realize its enormous, unexploited potential for reaching and enlightening voters who now do not know what it is talking about.

Findings of polls over the years hint at the magnitude of this undeveloped educational opportunity, even allowing for the fact that some respondents may say they "don't know" just to get the quiz over with. Roughly *half* or more of the people don't know how many U.S. senators there are from each state, don't know that U.S. representatives come up for reelection every two years, don't know who their congressman or senators are, don't know what the Bill of Rights is. Increasing millions who could vote, don't. And a wide range of lesser indicators show a falling off of interest and involvement in politics.

Less well known is the fact that indifference extends to television news: Everybody has a television set, but about half the viewers say they almost never watch the evening network news. Only about one American in 50 watches the network news every night and only one in a hundred says he gives it his "full attention." One small study found that of those who had watched the network news the evening they were called, a third said they had not watched all of it and half could not remember the topic of even one story they had seen. Almost no one remembered what any of the commentary sermonettes was about. Large-scale studies confirm the general picture: huge populations, not watching, not attending, not remembering—many at the same time telling pollsters that they get most of their news from television and/or trust television news most.

James David Barber is the James B. Duke professor of political science at Duke University.

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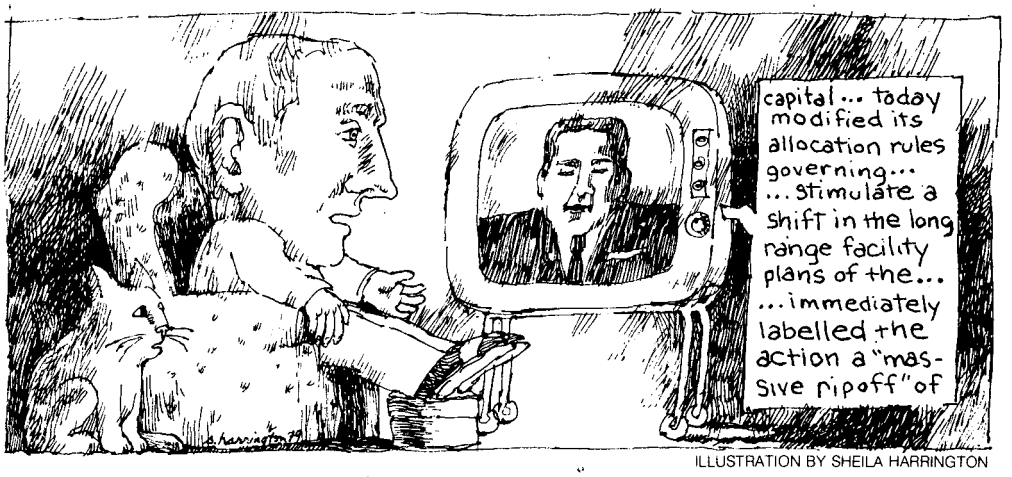

ILLUSTRATION BY SHEILA HARRINGTON

Perhaps the ignorance and indifference of half the public doesn't matter much. This line of reasoning might suggest that as long as they leave politics to the better informed they will do little harm. Or they will listen to and be guided by their betters. Or they will vote their broad partisan interest anyway, or follow their party leaders. Those arguments have to contend with evidence on declining party loyalties, growing distrust of authorities across the board, the near irrelevance of party organizations in electoral politics, and the impact of geographic mobility on political connections organized around geography.

In a broader sense, I think it is dangerous to democracy to coast along with half the potential voters uninformed and disconnected from the flow of public affairs. The absurd and yet repeatedly very powerful candidacies of George Wallace give pause.

In 1968, a "new Nixon" (he of "lowered voices," "bring us together," and "open administration") artfully exploited television and popular amnesia to squeak into office; it does not seem to me an exaggeration to say that he nearly succeeded in setting up an American tyranny and that his political demise was nearly accidental. Nor does it seem excessively Jeremianic to wonder what might happen, say in another Great Depression, if modern day Huey Longs and Father Coughlins got going and no Franklin Roosevelt presented himself. In the long run, democracy will depend on at least a modicum of very widely shared values and images of reality, and it is unlikely to survive many intense crises with a huge underclass of politically anomic voters. That is much more dangerous now than it was in, say, the Age of McKinley. Social and political change moves much faster today, world crises quickly affect domestic affairs, social structures are far more protean.

With television perking along as at present, the danger will be with us. But it is possible that TV is going through a phase that will result in an even worse situation. Obviously television has already "gone the way of radio" from early intensity to late casualness of popular use. Beyond that, new television technology may soon do for the medium what phonograph records helped to do for radio: split off the middle-class audience from the common experience and into a series of independent taste markets. The average-income viewers will eventually be able to get what they want when they want it—by cable TV, video cassettes, or whatever—relegating mass broadcast television to a video least common denominator for the proles. If it becomes possible for the viewer to punch up Shakespeare or Springsteen on his set as he pleases, the national experience of everybody watching "All in the Family" at the same time will fall off. I do not want to speculate on what that will mean for television economics, but it is pretty obvious that it would mean the breaking-up of the contemporary shaping and sharing of values and perceptions that goes on in television entertainment on a very wide scale, the bridging among social classes

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and regions and age groups. For today television entertainment—not news—is probably the main force in reinforcing nationwide political attitudes, as it conveys to the millions changing images of authority, boundaries of tolerance, criteria for celebrification, fashions of social action, and the like. Subtract from the scene the common tutelage of entertainment and you simultaneously fragment the national consciousness and isolate the less advantaged in a cultural ghetto. What would be left for mass broadcast would be live sports—and news. Then the burden on television news as conveyor of common assumptions would be a lot heavier than it is today.

So I think we need to look at television news as the educational medium most promising for reaching and teaching the less informed what they need to know to do democracy well. At least for the 23,000,000 "functional illiterates," it may be the only hope. I know the argument that news is journalism, not education for democracy or anything else. If that means journalism has a responsibility for telling the truth, journalists also have a responsibility for telling it in a way people can learn it. If the argument is that journalism, including television news, should be or can be neutral in the largest ideological sense, that is too naive a claim to bother with.

To the argument that the better informed are also ill-informed, and thus in need of instruction, I would say let them go to *The New York Times* or "The McNeil/Lehrer Report"; network news has more urgent work to do with the great unwashed. Nor does this boil down to a question of access, either of the put-a-cabbie-on-the-air type or the Ed Muskie give-the-mike-to-the-heckler variety; the cabbie mumbles, the heckler wanders. For the education idea to work, we need even more talented and professional television journalists than we now have.

Finally, I do not think the *primary* need is for a restructuring of television corporations, governmental relations, or technological innovations—though all surely do shape the product. Rather the core problems seem to me to be cultural, and to be correctable by conscious choice within the general system now extant or coming to be.

With those conclusions or prejudices out in the open, let me illustrate what I see as the main problem categories and some conceivable solutions.

Today's Show

There are ways television news blocks understanding on the part of any viewer, however wise and curious. Some of these defects are frequently denounced, but usually in a tone that implies they are the inevitable shortcomings of any attempt to convey current political realities to a massive audience. It seems to me, however, that these flaws are largely the result of gearing the medium to the needs and knowledge of the *better*-informed. If I'm right, then making the news better also means making it more—not less—broadly appealing.

The problems with the way the news is now presented include, at least:

Blanked-out history. Television is the quickest medium, a "headline service," its news traditionally composed from wire service reports and a few daily newspapers, presented in brief gasps totaling less than a newspaper front page. It rarely refers to the past. Until recently the networks did not even keep tapes of their own newscasts. The "bank" of as-yet-unused stories was cleaned out at the end of a month. Clarifying information on analogous events in the past and on developments leading up to the reported event tend to be sacrificed. For example, what a candidate said today is almost never shown alongside what he said a week ago—much less a year or a decade ago. The assumption that viewers follow a running story from evening to evening is not warranted for the less-informed half, who are, at best, in-and-outers. The better-informed must generally supply, from their own memories, the historical contexts that make the event meaningful. In presi-

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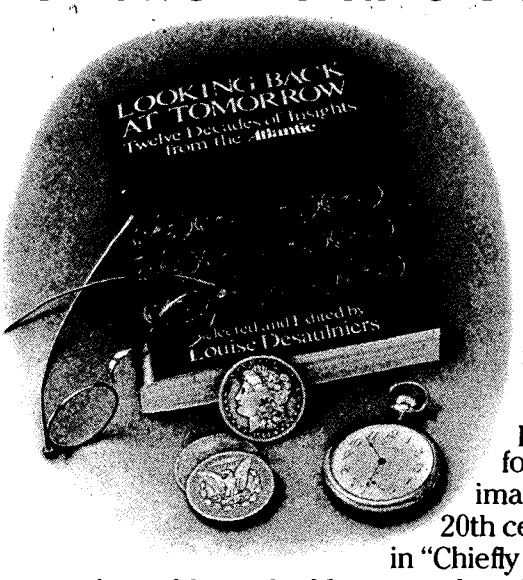

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dential election politics, network news emphasizes the "campaign stress test"—discerning the candidate's presidential character by how he performs running around New Hampshire or Wisconsin—and the gaffe of the day, at the expense of relevant biographical data. Viewers do not get a sense of where the story is coming from, the background against which the figure appears.

Lack of closure. The clearest example is Washington myopia: reporting dramatic announcements, bills passed, etc., without following up on the impact of Washington decisions on the society. In presidential politics, the news rarely links a candidate's campaign performance with any particular aspect of the presidential role. The viewer is deprived of criteria of relevance derived from anticipated consequences. This and the previous lack amount to what might be called quotidianism—a vice of journalism at large, but exaggerated in television, as the networks seek to cover those events deemed important by the *Times* without even the newspaper's ability to fill in the subsequent details.

Itemization. The news is morselized, in Robert Lane's term. Discernment of larger patterns is rare and avoided. Thus it took a very long time for television news to add up Vietnam and Watergate from the sum of daily items. The pattern of Congress exempting itself from the laws it imposes is only now developing in national consciousness.

Thus the lack of linkage—to the past, to the future, and to parallel contemporary events—deprives viewers of informational contexts, presents them rather with lists of disjointed fragments that they must connect. Again, it is left to the already well-informed to supply the missing criteria of relevance.

Reduction to opinion. John Stuart Mill wanted truth and falsehood to grapple in order that an accurate depiction of reality might emerge. For a variety of reasons (largely inheritances from broadcasting history and the starvation of its news branches), television news tends to substitute opinion for fact, for example by quoting the conclusion but not the key evidence of experts or politicians. Interviews focus on the feeling of political actors, such as Begin and Sadat, rather than what they are saying. Public opinion—sentiment—is frequently elicited, although, as is well known, 70 per cent of any given random sample will express an opinion on anything, whether or not they have any information and whether or not their opinion has any connection with their behavior.

The slide to fiction. Life is ragged, fiction is neat. Television news tends to wrap up each story, to try to march it from beginning through middle to end—in 90 seconds. That rounding out requires radical editing, eliminating rough edges of information and conveying an impression of patness, a finished quality, not often found in the Real World. More misleading is that offshoot of the television news, the docudrama. Docudrama, though labeled as fiction, looks like reality. It is probably taken as reality (as are historical novels) by almost all the audience, whose enjoyment depends on their capacity to suspend disbelief. One cannot get the full benefit of *Richard III* if one has to keep reminding oneself that the real Richard was nothing like that. Docudramas—"Seven Days in May," "Roots," "Washington Behind Closed Doors," "King"—shuffle sequences and characters to create dramatic appeal; in the course of that they cut and distort information, but perhaps as important they convey a sense of political experience as gliding along the rising and falling action toward a particular cathartic denouement. The soap operas, with their endless wriggles of development and their dangling plot threads, come closer to Life as She is Lived.

The Great Unwatched

Obviously what television news does not present cannot be learned. But if

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we are talking about the unmotivated and ill-informed half of the people, the problem of enlisting their attention in the first place presents the primary challenge. He who will not watch will not learn, no matter what is broadcast. Why do half the set owners ignore the evening news? Television news is thought important as a national "agenda setter," but that assumes perceptual energies are already aroused and that the problem is channeling them. For the inattentive half, a big part of the problem is *motivating* attention.

Lacking tight evidence on why such people do or don't watch the news, I fall back on speculation:

Foreign language. The words carry the message. Viewers who cannot understand the words will turn off the set. Yet in one CBS Evening News half hour (May 16, 1979), the audience was assumed to understand:

allocation formula
collusion
improprieties
consumption levels
political conspiracy
political ironies
alleviating
surcharges
most-favored-nation trade status
trade credits
tariff concessions
strategic arms
cold shutdown
performed an analysis
wage-price guidelines
assets
dividends
capital gains
honoraria
Republican conference leader
cottage industry
secluded
confiscate
legalize
pork-barrel legislation
all deliberate speed
long-range facility plan
racially imbalanced
litigation
enrollment
vanguard

There is no way that vocabulary can catch and hold the average high school graduate who happens to tune in on his way to "The Jeffersons." In addition to the strange language, he is asked to take an interest in events far away, largely among the rich and powerful who are foreigners to him. There is little (though some) attempt to connect the news to *his* concerns and values and images, to begin or end where he is. He is asked to take it on faith that somehow, someday he will be glad he got the message. Educationally, that rarely works. To avoid intellectual strain all he has to do is switch off; Roger Mudd will never know.

Psychic numbing. There sits the anchorman in his coat and tie, cool and comfortable. "Good evening," he says, in a friendly tone. The ritual gets underway, in a regular, steady rhythm. Some of the stories are horrible—butchery and mayhem—and nearly all suggest anxiety. But the little slices of trouble are sandwiched between commercials, which are relieving, and the good old anchorman always comes back, apparently undisturbed by the terrors he has just been telling about. The pictures are in technicolor, somehow less jarring, more romantic and prettier than black and white, even when they show the bodies at Jonestown.. The commentary piece may verge on irony and indignation, but the commentator never raises his voice. The "California light piece" helps smile away the news blues. At the end comes the anchorman's benediction, marking a period, saying that's over with, all done.

Television's intimacy militates against excitement; you don't want a raver in your living room. But the nearly uniform brevity and steady pace of the reports also tend to flatten and muffle excitement. The narratives are so short that one is barely involved before one must move on to the next story, so the excitement of following along a connected, developing narrative is sacrificed in order to cover more stories. There is little time for explanation—the excitement of learning how things work.

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For at least these reasons, television news comes across as a less than rousing experience for the viewer and is particularly out of sync with the working class mode of emotional discourse. Part of that failing stems from the fact that a half hour has to be filled up every day and most days nothing much happens. But a large part is due, I think, to the manner of presentation.

Vague ambiguity. Television's history of intimidation by government and its incredible commercial success make it cautious. Viewers are often left in the dark as to the rights and wrongs of events. Yet even the uninvolved half of the public has an interest in forming preferences, making judgments, choosing positions. That is probably the main attitude they bring to the news. What they encounter there, from the newscasters, is a swamp of moral ambiguity. The anchorman almost never tells what he makes of what he says, in a forthright, evaluative fashion. Cronkite did so in 1968 in a series of commentaries on Vietnam, Chancellor did so on the occasion of Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre." But normally the anchorman keeps his values to himself. Valuations in the story are carefully "balanced," pro and con, two sides to the issue. The field reporter's end comment is usually "on the one hand... on the other hand... and the future lies ahead." Editorial comment is carefully isolated from the regular stories. Enthusiasm is as carefully checked as disdain—which helps to explain the inordinate attention to Cronkite's frown, Brinkley's curled lip, Mudd's wide-eyed grin, Rather's jut jaw. It is OK to wax patriotic over such side shows as the moon shots, but not over the important news. The impression the casual viewer probably carries away is that something is being held back, that he is not getting the full story. The assumption seems to be that direct expressions of preference would be too powerful, too affecting for the audience to handle without losing their balance.

One the motivational side, then, television news' foreignness, flatness, and evaluative flaccidity underattract the political underclass. What imaginable changes might work to attract and instruct that mass student body now physically or psychologically absent?

News For Everyman

Get government out of the censorship business. To free up television news for creative experimentation, the criterion for re-licensing a TV station ought to be performance no worse than the worst newspaper in the country. There are many more multi-channel areas now, but even where there is only one station, requiring "balance" and "fairness" reinforces precisely the wrong tendencies, the responsible numbness that seems unlikely to incite broad interest. Television news cannot be expected to stop quaking in its boots every time a president snaps his fingers

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as long as these anti-constitutional laws are in force. The effect is to chill the experimentation from which we might learn how to engage the disengaged.

Simplify the language. That will make the news *more* elegant, for most of the long words are jargony pomposities and euphemistic indirections. The literary challenge ought to intrigue the new intelligentsia in television, get them reading Twain and Dickens—and Edward R. Murrow—in their spare time. Trial runs with alternative taped versions shown to experimental audiences should quickly reveal what language connects with the mind of the typical ill-educated viewer.

Poll for popular contexts. Network research divisions ought to shift resources from polling on issue preferences, the election horse-race, etc. to discovering how, at this stage of history, the less-informed voter perceives what is going on—the contexts he starts from. It takes much more work and listening than little check-mark quizzes on the SALT treaty. But such information could help the newscasters hook into what the audience is ready to learn.

Lengthen the main stories. The evening news might start with a quick rundown of the headlines, say five minutes' worth, and then progress to three eight-minute stories on main topics. Each would be a sustained, connected narrative or explanation, not a disjointed list of items, carrying the viewer along an increasingly interesting and involving line of development. The magazine segments on "Sixty Minutes" show how that could develop.

Break out of the "today's news" box. Today's news would be featured in the headlines, but the long stories need not be so immediate. DeWitt Wallace discovered that pieces "of enduring value"—even old ones—could attract an audience to the *Reader's Digest* (circulation 30,000,000 plus). Particularly nowadays, when the most important stories seem to be developments rather than events, stories from the past relevant to today ought to be exploited. Biography, for example, has strong popular appeal. The networks need to invest in much more extensive historical collections and the retrieval systems to make them usable, and in training their researchers to find their way around in relevant academic specialties.

Say why a story is important. Whenever possible, the lead ought to make explicit the story's significance. That discipline might well weed out a lot of extraneous mish-mash. It would enliven stories of demonstrable impact—to the interest of the uninvolved half.

Let the reporter report his reactions. That includes the anchorman. If he has a judgment—even an "unbalanced" one—bring it up front. The present wooden Indian posture is unrealistic and misleading. Cronkite's opinion may be interesting from time to time; if nothing else it gives the viewer something to react to, argue with. Get past the image of the reporter as judge, charged with being "fair." The reporter's charge is to tell the truth, which is not the same thing.

But make the main content facts. Cut down on Jake Javits saying he thinks the Kennedy plan is a good idea, while Jesse Helms doesn't. Who cares? The question is, is it or isn't it? Television journalism should be much more aggressive in digging out the relevant facts. Far too often the "quote somebody" method results in long, idiotic, attention-consuming distractions—*vide* "ethnic purity" in 1976. And leave fiction to the prime timers. Journalism's distinction is bringing real evidence to bear on tough contemporary questions.

Television's strength is its mass appeal. Turning it into *The New York Times* won't work and would be superfluous anyway. Instead research and experimentation should focus on how network news can reach out to the millions in need of civic education. Over the long run that might contribute to a more rational and humane democracy. Or, to take the darker view, it might help stave off political disaster. ■

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Tidbits and Outrages

DOL Abandons Teamster Probe, Finds Bigger Target

A lot of colleges and universities have been closing their doors and a lot more are faced with severe financial problems. The Department of Labor plans to help out by taking legal action against the schools that do not pay the minimum wage to student advisers who live in dormitories.

The "Tell The Firemen First" Principle

The FAA conducts surprise drills at airports to determine how fast firefighting crews can respond to emergencies. But Glenn Frankel of *The Washington Post* has found out that firefighters at the FAA's own airport, Dulles, are tipped off in advance of such drills. "We're told to be in the trucks ready to go with the station doors open and the engines ready."

Undocumented Aid

Illegal aliens are helping to save the social security system from bankruptcy. According to one 1976 study they contribute at least $500 million a year to the social security trust fund, with little or no chance of collecting.

And Harrisburg Might Not Be There Tomorrow Anyway

The transcript of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission meetings in Harrisburg should be the constant study of those who want to know how the government really works. "The only time in the transcripts when the commissioners devote sustained attention to one subject," noted *The Washington Post*, "is when they debate, sometimes for hours, the wording of a press release."

Our favorite part of the transcript comes when Commissioner Victor Gilinsky, after a long search, finally identifies the commission's evacuation expert, Don Collings (although the experts' exact name remains open to dispute—he is variously identified in the transcripts as John Collings and Don Collins, and when we called the NRC they told us his real name is Harold, although he is sometimes called "Doc"). Gilinsky, asks the expert: Do they have places to tell people to go?" Collings' answer: "I imagine they do, but you know those are things people decide when they do it."

Collings was then asked to "interface with whoever your counterpart person is" in Pennsylvania and find out if he couldn't be a bit more definite. When Collings called back with a report, the transcript reads: "Gilinsky: 'Let me ask you, are you talking about Harrisburg too?'

"Collings: 'Let's see, Harrisburg is in what county?' [Mumbling to himself, obviously looking at the map.]"...

Is Elizabeth Ray Obsolete?

The gasoline shortage produced hardship for us all. We have this report from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where Rep. Benny Bagert complained to his fellow state legislators that it was so hard to find gas that "my secretary had to drive around two hours before she could fill up my car."

Especially now that our secretaries are all out pumping gas....

What was the effect of Proposition 13 on Santa Clara County, California? The Board of Supervisors added four new staff positions, citing its increased responsibilities under the new law.

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A Slight Oversight: Congress' Space Probe

by Eric Schnurer

The air is tense with excitement while the congressmen slowly file in and take their places behind the long panel of desks at the front of the committee room. As they sit down before the banks of microphones and pitchers of cold water, camera flashes explode in a small Fourth-of-July. Reporters sit at the press table, their pens poised, waiting for something to happen. The crowd, wedged into the small room, murmurs expectantly. The dazzling chandeliers and the television strobes bathe the room in a powerful light—the light of truth it seems.

Behind another set of tables, facing the congressmen, sit the witnesses. They look worried. Papers quiver in their hands, their faces betraying their nervousness. Soon, no doubt, the truth will be known. The congressmen will extract it with their tough, probing questions. And what isn't extracted will turn up in dossiers compiled by the eager and competent staff aides huddled now behind the congressmen. The chairman bangs the gavel. An oversight hearing is about to begin.

That, at any rate, is the way they told us it would be back in January when the 96th Congress came to town. The 96th, fresh from campaigning and in touch with the mood of its constituents, took to calling itself the Oversight Congress. *They* weren't going to be passing any new spending programs. No, that's not what the public wanted. What the public wanted was less spending—they wanted their legislators to root out the waste in current programs and to do something about the never-ending spectacle of cost-overruns. And that's what the 96th was going to give them. This was the Congress, everyone agreed, that would emulate people like John Moss, who, unfortunately, had just retired after 26 years in the House. Too bad. Moss was an ornery fellow, but he certainly knew how to hold an oversight hearing. He had been chairman of the Commerce Committee's Oversight and Investigations subcommittee, and if ever there was a subcommittee that could make witnesses cringe, this was it. Every time they held a hearing, it was on page one. Moss always had some secret internal document, or a just-published GAO report, and he would wave it in the air for dramatic effect. It made great television.

The only problem was that special "oversight" subcommittees like Moss' couldn't do much else besides get on television. Moss could hold all the hearings he wanted, but his subcommittee didn't have any authority to do anything past that. It couldn't, for

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example, pass any new laws or order any abuses to stop, so the best it could do when it found some government mischief was to raise holy hell and hope for the best.

But the 96th Congress had an answer for that, too. In fact, the reason they were calling themselves the Oversight Congress was that *everyone* was going to get in on the oversight act. Oversight wouldn't just be in the hands of oversight subcommittees. Appropriations subcommittees would now be doing their share of overseeing, and authorization subcommittees, too. And what could be better than that? These were the subcommittees that *did* have power—they reviewed and approved agency budgets—and since they did that year after year, they would be able to see questionable patterns emerging on the horizon, would find the fraud others would miss. Of course, these subcommittees hadn't done too well in this regard in the past, but that was presumably because they were so busy passing new government spending bills. Now they wouldn't have to worry about those, so there would be plenty of time left for tough oversight. Anyway, that was how it seemed last January.

To get a fix on how the Oversight Congress was bearing up to the task, I took a look this summer at what seemed to be a typical oversight hearing, held on June 28 by the Space Science and Applications subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee. The subcommittee has jurisdiction over NASA, and last May, NASA had a problem: it was going to need more money for its fiscal year 1980 budget. A lot more money—$220 million. Only a few months before, the agency had asked for $610 million, claiming that would get them through 1980. But all of a sudden NASA was saying that it needed 36 per cent more than it had originally thought. Even more surprisingly, this news came barely two months after NASA had come before the space science subcommittee for an extra $185 million to cover cost overruns that had accrued during fiscal 1979, most of which were the result of new cash demands by North American Rockwell, the chief contractor for NASA's Space Shuttle program. At that time, NASA officials had assured their congressional watchdogs that they foresaw no more cost-overrun problems. Now they were saying that they had been wrong—very wrong—and that Congress was going to have to pay the bill.

This was startling news indeed; the kind of news that simply cried out for an oversight hearing to find out what in the world had gone wrong. Where did a 36-percent cost increase come from in only two months? Had NASA known about it all along? If not, why not? If so, what *else* was there NASA wasn't telling Congress? There were a lot of questions that needed answering, and when the Space Sciences and Applications subcommittee scheduled a hearing, as part of what it called its "continuing duty to hold oversight," I was heartened by the prospect of a tough congressional probe beneath the surface.

The subcommittee, to be sure, does not have a reputation for being excessively stern with NASA. Indeed, its three most active members—chairman Don Fuqua of Florida, ranking Republican Larry Winn of Kansas, and Ronnie G. Flippo of Alabama—are described by colleagues, congressional staff aides, and reporters who cover NASA matters as "space freaks." They have been very good to NASA over the years. This year, for example, they gave NASA $43 million *more* than it had requested. They not only restored to the NASA budget items that the Office of Management and Budget had deleted—in one case reinstating $2 million OMB had cut from NASA's request, and then throwing in an *extra* $2 million beyond the original figure to show their indignation—but they also voted funds for programs that NASA hadn't even had the temerity to ask OMB for, like extra back-up spacecraft. They had at times urged the agency to devise a strategy for avoiding any space funding cuts in the future.

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If my anxieties were aroused by what I had heard about the subcommittee members, they were heightened when I wandered into the meeting room of the full committee on my way to cover the oversight hearings. The committee meets in a spacious room, decorated in "late NASA." Along the walls there are large, beautiful photographs and drawings of space exploration and the wondrous vehicles the United States has used for that purpose. Scattered among them are striking models of some of the more famous space contraptions, like the Saturn V. More than half the colorful display is devoted to the space program's current centerpiece, the Space Shuttle.

Setting The Tone

At the hearing itself, it was chairman Fuqua who set the tone, letting the officials from NASA and Rockwell know right from the start just how much hot water they were in. "The subcommittee," he said in his opening statement, "is recorded in strong support of the Space Shuttle program for many years. We are also on record for questioning the wisdom of the Space Shuttle capability with a four-Orbiter as opposed to a five-Orbiter fleet." (That was the extra spacecraft the subcommittee had added to the budget.)

Republican Winn chimed in with a similar, get-tough approach. "I want to take this opportunity," he began, "to again publicly state my support for the Space Shuttle program. I have been involved with this program from its inception and I am thoroughly convinced that this expenditure of tax dollars is more than justified. . . . I hope these hearings and subsequent conversations will adequately relieve my concern and allow me to continue the avid support of NASA that I have displayed in the past."

The hearing dragged on in this vein until suddenly Rep. Flippo, the third member in attendance, began to sum up his case against NASA: "It would

Policymaking for Social Security

Martha Derthick

This volume is the first comprehensive investigation of the political and bureaucratic forces that have shaped the social security program over the past 40 years. With detailed documentation from primary sources, Derthick shows that the program has been dominated by a small group of specialists and has been insufficiently debated and understood by others. She argues that social security ought to be treated like any other government program, and that reduction of benefits ought to be "removed from the realm of the unthinkable and brought within the realm of legitimate political debate."

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appear that after learning of a significant additional funding request in the fall of 1978, that NASA did perhaps not give much consideration to requesting additional funding from OMB and in addition, when learning of additional funding requirements in March of 1979, NASA's first reaction was to reallocate funds from production, apparently, while fully understanding the excessive cost penalties associated with such a plan."

Having laid out NASA's sins in this blistering fashion, Flippo zeroed in on his target. "Now I do not consider that supplemental requests or budget amendments should be submitted to Congress at the drop of a hat, but I wonder if NASA gives proper consideration to these alternatives?"

Then the $220 million question: "Is it possible," Flippo queried, "that NASA has been too timid in asking for the resources that they need?" Just in case the NASA and Rockwell officials who were the victims of this withering attack hadn't fully comprehended his point, Flippo made it again: "My concern is that perhaps you are not aggressive enough in regard to OMB in fighting for the kind of funds that we need to maintain our technical capabilities in the program."

Flippo was finished for now, but Winn picked up the oversight ball. He too had a handful of tough questions, not about NASA's fiscal conservatism. Instead, Winn focused on the effects of inflation, and how they may, indeed, have justified the 36-percent growth in three months. Painstakingly, he led George W. Jeffs, Rockwell's corporate vice president, and Edward P. Smith, the company's Space Shuttle man, through the paces of his proof, despite their seeming determination not to understand what he was up to:

Jeffs: . . . the Program Managers go through a detailed review of the work to be done through the year and they do end up with a handshake with respect to how much is going to be required to accomplish the task. . . .

Winn: So when you enter into a negotiated contract and you end up with a shake of the hand, as you described it, you're sort of playing a "Have faith in me," or "Trust me" type of philosophy because of your experience in working with NASA. You've talked about figures. You talk about round figures, based on what they submit to you at the time, or what you submit to them at the time. Am I right?

Jeffs: That's right. I think that NASA normally follows up with a piece of paper on it though.

Winn: How soon?

Jeffs: I think that's very late. On specific cases I'd have to refer that to Mr. Smith.

Smith: Within weeks.

Winn: Within weeks?

Smith: Yes.

Winn: It would never go as long as a 60- to 90-day period?

Smith: I believe there have been instances, but they have been rare.

Winn: They're unusual?

Smith: Yes.

Winn: But isn't it possible that under inflation, just with inflation alone in a 60-day or 90-day period, let's say a 60-day period, that would cost you additional money?

Smith: If you didn't plan. . . .

Winn: From what you agreed upon with a handshake, before you got it in writing, is what I'm saying.

Smith: In a pure sense, yes.

Winn: And in that 60- to 90-day period—I'm just speculating—let's say that there could be additional design changes or additional changes that would develop. That wouldn't be unusual, would it?

Smith: No.

Winn: And those would be costly.

Smith: Yes.

Winn: Easily could be. Not necessarily, but they could be because inflation is there. It's sailing right along every month.

Jeffs: Yes, sir. But when they agree on a task they move off the task, even though they still have not completely determined how they're going to impact other tasks, to provide room for it.

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A Wild Question

Finally, after a few hours of this intense confrontation, the indefatigable Flippo decided to mince words no longer. It was time to show NASA just where they stood after a vigorous day of oversight. He eyed Jeffs and his contingent from Rockwell, and let it all hang out.

"This is probably a wild question," he warned, "but could you tell this committee something, can you help us in trying to find the way we can be most helpful to NASA and to the operation to advance the Shuttle? What's the number one thing holding us back here? Are we trying to do things on a shoestring, inadequate funding, inadequate scheduling? What can we do to advance this program?"

On June 28, of course, NASA was saying the best way to help out the Space Shuttle was to give them the $220 million. Yet when Fuqua asked if that would be enough money to get them through fiscal year 1980, NASA administrator Dr. Robert Frosch, perhaps sensing he was among friends, replied, "I have to say that I believe the answer is yes, but I am nervous."

In excusing Frosch at the end of his testimony, Fuqua added: "We appreciate your being here. We are always happy to have you. We hope that the next time you come back you feel more comfortable with the $220 million."

After a full day of oversight, Fuqua and his cohorts had succeeded in doing what Winn had told them at the outset they must do: "re-establish our own confidence." Winn had probed the effects of inflation, Flippo had given NASA a few valuable pointers on budgetary planning; and Fuqua had made it apparent that his subcommittee was ready for more such inquests if necessary. All three could now support the additional $220 million with a clear conscience.

Which they did. In a conference committee in July, the House members voted to tack on the money, something that the Senate had already done without a hearing. (They just don't seem to have the oversight spirit in that body.) A week later the bill had passed and was signed by the President.

Now, a cynic—undoubtedly someone who's never seen an artist's rendering of the space shuttle "Enterprise" soaring majestically across a blue piece of canvas—might say that the committee was closing its eyes to an ongoing problem. He might think that, just as the committee hadn't tried too hard to discover that there would be problems just around the corner when they approved NASA's $185 billion request at their previous hearings, they didn't try too hard this time to see what was coming up, just down the road. He might even agree with the committee's own technical consultant that despite NASA's continual assurances that this batch of extra money was all they could foresee needing, the agency knows full well that there are further cost overruns, and that they will probably be back in a few months to ask for more. But then, of course, there will be more oversight hearings. And what could be better than that? ■

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Who's Who in the Carter Administration

The most disturbing thing about the recent cabinet changes was not who was fired, but who wasn't. **Juanita Kreps** has long ranked at the bottom of the White House's list in terms of ability. Why did she stay when the others left? As for loyalty, **Pat Harris** did not rank that much higher than **Joe Califano.** One has the depressing sense here that the White House was using a "two-fer" to appease the liberals who would be offended by Califano's firing. Do you remember how Nixon, after the Saturday Night Massacre, sought to appease liberals (whom he equated with Jews) with a highly publicized airlift of military equipment to Israel? The publicity—more than the aid itself—infuriated the Saudis, who then agreed to go along with the Arab oil embargo.... The press still doesn't understand the bureaucracy. As we have often pointed out, most cabinet secretaries have little time left over from their lobbying and public relations activities to actually manage their agencies. This was especially true of **Michael Blumenthal.** Yet we could not find one article about his firing that even mentioned that his deputy, **Robert Carswell,** is the man who really ran the Treasury Department.... **Robert J. Brown,** who only recently resigned as undersecretary of Labor, is a prime example of how little the White House knew—or cared—about what was going on at the subcabinet level. As long ago as the spring of 1977, insiders at the department were joking about how little he contributed.... Remember how Lyndon Johnson conned Arthur Goldberg into giving up a seat on the Supreme Court to serve as ambassador to the United Nations? Is it possible that **William Miller** has been similarly victimized by Jimmy Carter? He is giving up a job where he was assured power and independence for a job that during an election year is likely to be tightly controlled by the White House....

In

WHITE HOUSE

Chief of Staff—**Hamilton Jordan**

Senior Adviser to the President—**Hedley Donovan** was Editor-in-Chief of *Time* magazine from 1964 until this June.

Personal Representative of the President—**Robert Strauss** will handle the Mideast negotiations.

Director, Council on Wage and Price Stability—**R. Robert Russell** has been deputy director of the council.

Special Counsel—**Lloyd N. Cutler** will coordinate the administration's sale of the SALT II treaty to the Senate. He will remain as a partner in the Washington law firm of Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering.

Assistant to the Director for Administration, Office of Management and Budget—**Linda Smith** was Director of the Executive Secretariat of Transportation.

Assistant Social Secretary—**Marilyn Funderburk** is a veteran organizer of Washington benefits and fundraisers.

AGRICULTURE

General Counsel—**Daniel Marcus** has been Deputy General Counsel for HEW.

Deputy General Counsel—**Ruth Harkin,** the wife of Rep. Thomas Harkin (D-Iowa), has been county attorney for Storey County, Iowa.

COMMERCE

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks (acting)—**Lutrelle F. Parker** has been Deputy Commissioner.

DEFENSE

Deputy Secretary—**W. Graham Claytor, Jr.,** has been Secretary of the Navy and acting Secretary of Transportation.

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Secretary of the Air Force—**Hans M. Mark** was the Air Force undersecretary and has been acting secretary since May.

Undersecretary of the Air Force—**Antonia Handler Chayes** was the Air Force's Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. She is the wife of Abram Chayes, Harvard law professor and Legal Advisor of the State Department in the Kennedy administration.

Assistant Secretary for Research, Development and Logistics of the Air Force—**Robert J. Hermann** was Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Communications, Command and Control, and Intelligence.

ENERGY

Secretary—**Charles W. Duncan**

HEW

Secretary—**Patricia Roberts Harris**

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs—**Bill Wise** had been Harris' Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at HUD. Also moving from HUD to equivalent positions at HEW are **Warren Dunn,** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, and **Stephen Coyle** and **Randolph Kinder,** Executive Assistants to the Secretary.

Commissioner of Education—**Mary Berry** has been Assistant Secretary for Education.

HUD

Secretary—**Moon Landrieu**

JUSTICE

Attorney General—**Benjamin R. Civiletti**

LABOR

Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Relations—**William P. Hobgood** was Director of Mediation Services for the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

STATE

Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations—**J. Brian Atwood** was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

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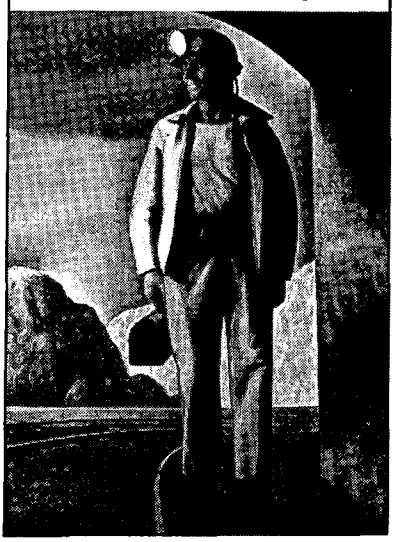

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Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Mexican Affairs—**Robert Krueger,** a former Texas congressman, ran for the Senate last year against Sen. John Tower.

Ambassador to Bulgaria—**Jack Perry**

Ambassador to Canada—**Kenneth Curtis** is former Governor of Maine.

Ambassador to the European Economic Community—**Thomas A. Enders**

Ambassador to New Zealand and Western Samoa—**Anne Clark Martindell**

Ambassador to Nicaragua—**Lawrence A. Pezzullo**

Ambassador to Niger—**James K. Bishop**

Ambassador to Papua, Guinea and the Solomon Islands—**Harvey J. Feldman**

Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago—**Irving G. Cheslaw**

Ambassador to Uruguay—**Lyle Franklin Lane**

Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.—**Thomas J. Watson** is the retired chairman of I.B.M.

Ambassador to Zambia—**Frank G. Wisner II**

TRANSPORTATION

Secretary—**Neil E. Goldschmidt**

TREASURY

Secretary—**G. William Miller**

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Federal Home Loan Bank Board
Chairman—**Jay Janis** has been Undersecretary of HUD.

Federal Reserve Board
Chairman—**Paul A. Volcker**

General Services Administration
Administrator for Human Resources and Management—**William M. Paz** is a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for civilian personnel.

Interstate Commerce Commission
Commissioner—**Marcus Alexis** was the chairman of the economics department at Northwestern University.

Commissioner—**Darius W. Gaskins, Jr.,** was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy for policy analysis.

Commissioner—**Thomas A. Trantum** was a security analyst with Rothchild, Unterberg, Towbin in New York.

Merit Systems Protection Board
Member—**Ronald P. Wertheim** has been Deputy General Counsel for the Peace Corps. He is the husband of Mitzi Wertheim, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Director of Merit Systems Review and Special Studies—**Patricia Mathis** has been a Deputy Assistant Secretary at Treasury.

National Mediation Board
Member—**Robert J. Brown,** who has been Undersecretary of Labor, has been nominated for this post.

Out

White House
Director, Council on Wage and Price Stability—**Barry Bosworth** will return to the Brookings Institution.

Deputy Assistant to the President for Communications—**Greg Schneiders** will work with Robert Squier, a political consultant.

Deputy Special Trade Representative—**Alan W. Wolff**

Commerce
Assistant Secretary for Export Promotion—**Frank A. Weil** has resigned after losing an internal struggle with Commerce Secretary Juanita Kreps and the White House for control of international trade policy.

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Deputy Secretary—**John F. O'Leary**

Assistant Secretary for Policy and Evaluation—**Alvin L. Alm**

HEW
Secretary—**Joseph A. Califano, Jr.** Also leaving are Assistant Secretary for Public

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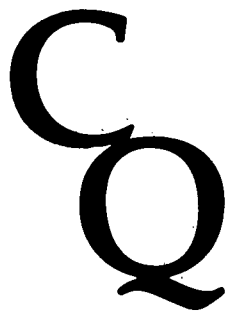

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Director, Office of Civil Rights—**David Tatel** will leave by December 1.

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Attorney General—**Griffin B. Bell.** Also leaving are **Michael J. Egan,** Associate Attorney General; **Daniel J. Meador,** Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Improvements in the Administration of Justice; and **Barbara A. Babcock,** Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division.

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Secretary—**Brock Adams.** Also leaving are **Alan E. Butchman,** Deputy Secretary; **Terence L. Bracey,** Assistant Secretary for Governmental and Public Affairs; and **Gary Gayton,** acting Administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

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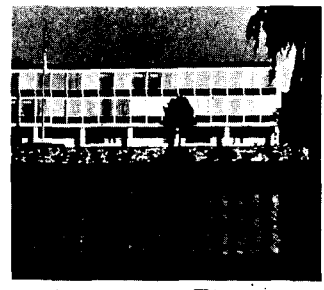

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The Velvet Cage: The Life of a GS-15

by Leonard Reed

The mushiness of government at the federal level—its lack of responsiveness to the citizenry, its torpidity, its facile evasion of attempts to nail down responsibility for non-feasance—stems, we are sometimes told, from the weakness of middle management. That, at any rate, is where top management is accustomed to place the blame, and a surprising number of middle managers agree with the assessment.

Middle management consists of those supervisory layers of government below the "supergrades." (The General Schedule of government jobs goes from GS-1 to GS-18, of which the highest three are the supergrades.) It includes some 13s and 14s, but the epitome of middle management is the GS-15—a species which, because of the bite it puts on our tax dollar, we are entitled to examine more closely.

Last year, the salaries of the 15s came to about one and a half billion dollars, or approximately the size of the entire federal budget for the year 1916. As against the average salary of slightly more than $18,000 for all federal employees, your composite GS-15 is a $44,000-a-year man (prior to the October, 1979 raise). He and his 32,188 fellow 15s account for about two per cent of federal employees. He is 51.8 years old and has been in government service for slightly more than 22 years. By the rules of the General Services Administration, the commissariat of such things, he is usually entitled to a private office with 225 square feet of space (although space-conscious GSA planners recently estimated he only needs 152 of them), a carpet on the floor and wooden furniture—which puts him one-up on the GS-14, who rates only metal. Depending on his agency, he is entitled to either a plastic, or the more highly prized chrome, water carafe, and a desk calendar with somewhat more panache than those of his lesser colleagues.

The responsibilities of middle managers with the same GS label run a wide gamut. A Voice of America official heading a broadcasting division of 150 people and a public relations man in the foreign aid program with a staff of two or three clerical subordinates are both "Division Chief, GS-15." And for every harried 15 in charge of a line operation or a productive analytical group, there are many more who are just *there*.

The variations in responsibility are not reflected in any salary differential.

Leonard Reed is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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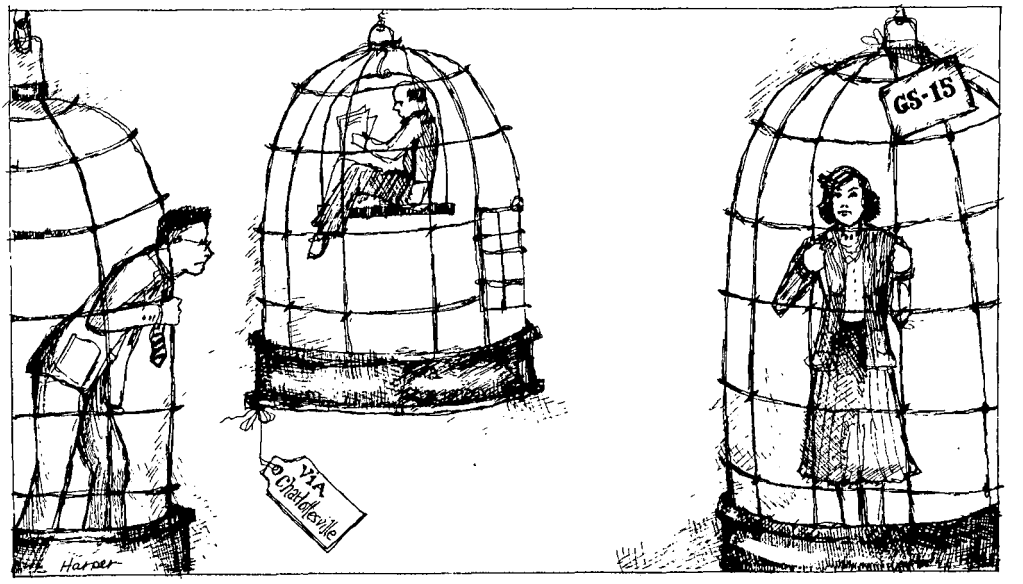

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER HARPER

Federal managers are not paid for the work they do or for the responsibilities they exercise: they are paid for what their job descriptions *say* they do. Over the years, as layer upon layer of management has been folded into the federal structure by successive "reorganizations," the writing of job descriptions may well have become the most creative work performed in government.

"I look over my job description," said one federal manager, "and I am drunk with power. 'As GS-15 Director of the Division of Planning and Analysis in the Office of the Secretary, incumbent is the Department's principle resource for evaluating department-wide systems, for advising the Secretary on management improvements he can usefully undertake, for dealing with top ranking people from state and local governments on matters of management.' Hell, I've been in this job for two years and have yet to talk to *anyone* in state or local government, and the closest I've been to the Secretary was in a traffic jam on Constitution Avenue. But yet it stands there, along with telling me I 'plan' and 'institute' and 'conduct' and 'apply the latest techniques. . . .' It's a hoax."

It's a hoax without which, however, the federal managerial structure would collapse like an overcooked souffle. Written within each agency, job descriptions must jibe with the levels of responsibilities for the successive grades, as set forth in the Federal Job Rating Standards. To justify the hierarchy it has developed, the agency is impelled to exaggerate the scope of managerial jobs, in order to have them meet the Rating Standards. As a result, substantial numbers of—probably most—federal managers are being paid salaries completely out of line with their miniscule responsibilities.

If that observation is at odds with the annual surveys of the Bureau of Labor Statistics which show that managers in the federal service earn less than their counterparts in private industry (and which are the basis of periodic "comparability" pay raises in the civil service), consider the survey process. To compare salaries in government and industry, a staff of 150 data collectors tucks the same Federal Job Rating Standards under its arm and visits about 3,800 private firms to determine what salaries private industry is paying people whose jobs match the responsibilities of the respective levels detailed in the book. The private employers and personnel directors with whom they talk are realistic about the duties of their management people: they are, at least in those industries still subject to competitive pressures,

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paying real dollars for actual performance. In effect, then, BLS—which makes no similar on-site study of the government jobs—takes as an article of faith the hoked-up responsibilities proclaimed in the GS-15's job description, finds the salary paid in private industry to executives actually exercising those responsibilities, and comes to the conclusion that the salaries of federal managers are lagging behind. Which is a bit like equating the military campaigns of Von Clausewitz with those of the man in the loony bin who says he is Napoleon.

In any meaningful sense, the $40,000-a-year government manager, in contrast to his industrial counterpart, has precious little real responsibility. A manager, to rate the name, needs a real voice in the selection and development of his staff; he should be able, within limits, to promote the talented and industrious and demote or get rid of the goof-offs.

"In most areas of government I've seen," said an experienced 15, "middle managers have just about nothing to do with those things. Division managers in our department have no role in hiring professionals for their staffs. We can't even select a temporary part-time typist—she has to be interviewed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary. We can make recommendations for promotions, but the decision is made elsewhere. So far as demoting or getting rid of anyone, well, you know that's out of the question. Even *recommending* disciplinary action against someone means handing your boss a hot potato he won't thank you for. So what you do is draw up vacation schedules, sign time cards, initial something that says you accept for your staff this person someone else has hired, sign and pass along the meaningless performance ratings on your staff that one of your subordinates has prepared. What you are is just a person of record. You know, there have been days upon days when the biggest decision I made was who gets the desk near the window."

Also in contrast to his profit-conscious counterpart in industry is the government manager's adversary relationship with productivity.

"Federal management technique," said a recent recruit from industry, "operates to reward inefficiency. Your GS standing is often determined by the number of people who work for you. And from what I've seen, staffs grow not because they are doing a good job but because they are doing a poor job. If you take two groups of people, each with a different level of competence, the less efficient group will need more people to accomplish the same amount of work as the other group in a given time. As the group grows because of its inefficiency, the GS ratings grow correspondingly, and that's where the pay-off is."

"The government contract process," he went on, "also operates to shield the middle manager from any direct responsibility for the quality of work theoretically under his jurisdiction. The illusion is foisted on the public that the federal government isn't growing. Federal employment has remained relatively stable only by the use of incredible numbers of contractors. In my office, we contract out $18 million a year—I'm *told* how much to spend—and I'd be hard put to justify more than $3 or $4 million of it. We have 28 people on staff but another 250 on the federal payroll via contract work."

A Rich Fantasy Life

Middle managers cope in different ways with this lack of authority. The most common response, because it is the least painful, is not to acknowledge the eunuch role and to live a make-believe life of hustle and bustle, taking on the affectations that help sustain the illusion of power. "I sent Bledsoe to the Omaha thing," says the federal Walter Mitty, mover of men. Asked by a colleague when he will take his vacation, he laughs sardonically, refers to his workload, and indicates that God only knows when he will find the time; he finds the time. "What a day!" he tells his wife. "The White House urgently needed a report on thus and so. . . ." (In

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fact, the previous day, a White House aide with whom the Secretary was lunching casually asked about something; the Secretary later queried *his* aides, and by the time our middle manager was galvanized into a frenzy, the White House had forgotten the matter entirely.)

The middle manager is the Lucky Pierre of government. If below him is a work force over which he generally has little control, and which, through grievance procedures supported by any of the federal employee unions can make his life difficult, poised above is the real power structure of the agency, represented by the tenured supergrades. (The political appointees in the supergrades and highest executive levels come and go; when they come, they are dependent upon the tenured supergrades for finding their way through the government maze, and when they go, any waves they made recede with them.) Within the agency and throughout government, the permanent supergrades form a loosely webbed but strong network whose members, characteristically, are alumni of the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia, the government's top-drawer in-house training operation. It is they who, in almost all instances, decide which 14s will become 15s and which 15s (only one in ten) they will ultimately admit into their exclusive club. (An "Executive Inventory File," begun in 1967, in which all 15s were computerized for their availability to fill GS-16 vacancies on a government-wide basis, was deactivated this year, having fallen into disuse; the tenured supergrades made their own selections from within their own agencies.)

All of which makes the middle manager the most vulnerable of civil servants—unprotected by either employee unions or an old-boy network. If he feels he has been shabbily treated, he is restrained from making much of it by the knowledge that for his place in the sun he is at the mercy of the supergrades, who expect him to be a team player.

But, for any of a number of rea-

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sons—among them *not* being a team player, running afoul of a superior, or simply being shafted—at some point in his life the GS-15 will probably find himself on the road to Nowheresville. Someone will be moved into a newly created job just above him, or he will be transferred to a job with nonexistent functions, or be made somebody's "special assistant."

Will he quit? Not likely. At this point, his mobility is probably sharply limited. It takes most GS-15s 15 or 20 years to reach that level, by which time they are in thrall to their pension prospects and their skills are not generally marketable outside at anything approaching their government salaries. So they become permanent cadres in the army of special assistants, contributing further to the basic disease of middle management: overpopulation. They join the political appointees who are put into newly created management jobs by successive administrations unwilling to grasp the nettle involved in displacing even the non-tenured holdovers from the previous regimes. (Political appointees, in fact, stay in government service for an average of almost 13 years.)

By a strange sleight of hand, the resulting bulge around the middle of the government grows without much overall growth in federal employment: between March, 1977, and March, 1978, the increase of 15,990 people employed in grades 9-18 was almost offset by the decrease of people in grades 1-8. In the same vein, when a period of retrenchment sets in, the 15s are retained and the lower grades phased out; that is, as those in the lower grades vacate their jobs—usually by promotion—the jobs are abolished. (That a reduction in force that concentrates on the lowest grades achieves the minimum rather than the maximum economy is of no consequence in the federal scheme of things: Congress sets limits on the number of people on an agency's payroll, not on the size of the payroll.) The reason the agency gives for keeping its 15s and giving up its 3s and 4s is that it can't afford to lose the professional talent the 15s represent, and it will be harder to recruit the professionals when—as will inevitably happen—the budget screws are loosened. Perhaps more to the point is that the loss of a 15 threatens the justification on which a 16's grade rests, and so on up the line. It also means that a lot of well-paid middle managers spend their time doing clerical chores because of the depletion of the clerks' ranks.

The Great Time-Disposal

The population explosion in middle management has created a culture in which great numbers of people wander around in search of a function. (It takes years of seasoning before a normal person can conquer the sneaking malaise that comes from doing not very much for his $865 a week.) Having nothing growing on their own turf, they make tentative or bold moves toward someone else's, whereupon the defense mechanisms of the territorial imperative are activated. Subtly acrimonious memos go back and forth. Rivalrous activities develop which, if serving no public function, convince the participants that they are busy people indeed and quite a bit understaffed. (The early Soviet satirical novel, *The Little Golden Calf,* described the phenomenon well. As I recall it, a small and atrophying bureaucracy that deals in lumber in a region where the lumber has all but vanished is threatened by a newer, more vital bureaucracy that wants to take over the office space of the lumber officials. The lumber bureaucrats fire off to Moscow a long justification for their holding on to the space. In time, the dying lumber bureaucracy revives, thrives and has to expand its staff and offices—its sole activity being the enormous correspondence that has grown up around the battle for office space.)

An attack on the agency from the outside may, of course, unify its bickering elements. Before Joseph Califano was forced by Carter's public stand to suppress his opposition to the creation of a separate Department of

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Education, middle managers at HEW were up to their elbows in the production of papers explaining why Headstart, the vocational rehabilitation program, etc., should not become part of the proposed department. The same activity was simultaneously going on at the Veterans' Administration, the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture, and the Defense Department, all of which have elements threatened with incorporation into the Department of Education.

But bureaucratic bickering, whether directed within or without, is destructive, and the system has had to devise more harmonious ways to occupy its managers. Without anyone specifically designing it that way or, indeed, being conscious of it, a major and necessary activity of the system has been the creation of chores to use up surplus managerial time.

"Training" is a potent such user-up. The federal government spends an estimated $1 billion a year on training, the worth of which, according to the General Accounting Office, "is still largely a matter of faith." Nevertheless, a growing bureaucracy inside the government and, by indirection, a voracious government-keyed industry outside, demands that the manager design elaborate "career projections" for his staff and that he fill the training quotas established. "I'm pressured to get people into these courses that have no bearing on our work," said one division chief, "because they have these damn slots they want filled."

Middle managers themselves are sent off to courses that range from one-week sessions aimed at teaching how to cope with "mid-life career stress" to year-long, full-time employment at a university—often in a curriculum designed solely to broaden one's horizons. The GS-15 who finds himself on the training circuit—attending more than his share of such courses—may, with justification, suspect that someone has at last found a way of doing something with him.

Certain perennial treadmill exercises have come into being, notable among which is playing at budget. Getting the maximum amount of money from Congress being a goal dear to every agency's heart, the budget bureaucracies have grown and grown, until their very size has set into motion a continuing and repetitive process that grinds up managerial hours. In the Carter era, the process is called ZBB (zero-base budgeting), but only the name of the game has changed. "The first time we went through ZBB," a division head told me, "it made sense. But although nothing has changed in our work, we go through the same 'reassessment' every year and each time new artificial elements are added. Now, instead of starting with zero and planning forward, we start with 100 per cent of our budget and work backwards—that is, indicate what we would eliminate if we had to take cuts of 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent, etc. We have now gone through the exercises three times *this year* and revisions have been asked for each time. Well, we fake it—make it up. We pick the bulk make-believe cuts that make the paperwork easiest. We play the game. But last year, when we were faced with the prospect of *real* cuts, nobody referred to those exercises we had gone through."

Related complaints are echoed throughout the cavernous quarters of middle management: "We have three major planning documents a year to write," a manager told me. "Doing those stops everything else we are supposed to be doing. They have to be written in a particular format, and there are frequent changes in format. The only thing that doesn't change is that nobody ever reads them. I worked on them for three planning sessions. Not once were they ever approved—or disapproved. Or commented on. But if we didn't do them, what excuse would there be for having a Planning Review Staff?"

No Lean Meetings

Meetings, the Petri dish in which GS-15s are cultured, are by far the most important tool for consuming

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man-hours. I asked a federal manager if he would keep a list of the meetings he was required to attend for the eight days preceding our interview. His list showed 21 meetings, ranging from a low of one on one day to a high of five on another. If we allow one hour for each meeting, 21 of the 64 hours he worked during that period—or about 33 per cent of his time—were consumed in meetings. (The percentage is greater if we dispense with the myth of the half-hour lunch on which his 9-5:30 day is calculated to come to 40 hours a week; no management meetings are ever scheduled between noon and 2 p.m.) His list, incidentally, didn't include the meetings *he* called to brief his subordinates on the ones he had attended.

It would be foolish to insist that meetings are always a waste of time. Some are necessary and others are a well-known device for fudging responsibility. And, depending on your perspective, they are either effective modes of killing dumb ideas that come down from on high or of frustrating by bureaucratic torpor the will of the political leadership. The technique is to end the meeting on the project by scheduling another meeting and by then having longer and longer intervals between meetings until the idea perishes without a trace.

It is hard to find a federal manager who doesn't complain about the sterility of the meetings he must attend. But it is harder to find one who is immune from shock and rue if he is omitted from the invitation list. For to be left out is not only to lose face, to be declassed. It is also like being left out of the May Day picture of the Kremlin leadership, a signal to one's bureaucratic rivals that one is vulnerable. The wary bureaucrat makes sure that he's on the list for every last meeting within reach—not out of any illusion that the meetings serve a purpose but simply to protect his turf or, perhaps, seize the chance to enlarge it at an absent rival's expense.

The same considerations contribute to another albatross that our federal managers voluntarily place around their necks. "I think," said one manager who had entered government recently, "that the biggest shock for me was the pressure of the in-box. So much stuff comes to your desk everyday. It took me a year and a half before I knew what I had to read and what was just part of an eternal flow of irrelevant paper." The proliferation of high-speed duplication machines has facilitated the massive distribution of practically everything to virtually everybody. But more than technology is responsible for the mountains of impertinent trivia with which manager's in-boxes bulge.

While Manager Bledsoe is off attending his meetings, three types of papers are piling up in his in-box: those of general information (a retirement party for Susie Glotz, a catalog of new courses offered by the Department of Agriculture, a box score on the relative standing of each bureau in the collections for the United Fund, etc.); those marked specifically for Bledsoe's (or his office's) information; and those requiring some action, such as "clearance" by Bledsoe. Blame the profusion of general information on technology—it's as easy to run off a thousand copies as it used to be to make two carbons. But the other two categories in Bledsoe's in-box are there, in large part, because of the bureaucratic imperative: Bledsoe *wants* his name on those papers. However marginally their subject matter concerns his operation, he wants to be "informed" lest somebody trespass one of the boundaries of his province. Bledsoe has no idea why *some* of these documents are directed to his attention—it may be that for a reason no longer valid, one of his predecessors had a brief interest in the subject—but he would resist being removed from the addressee list.

"Clearing" a memo or dispatch is also a particularly touchy matter in bureaucratic relationships. "Clearing" simply means that each of the officials on the clearance list must initial the draft of the document or find some reason why a word or phrase should be changed. When our embassy in

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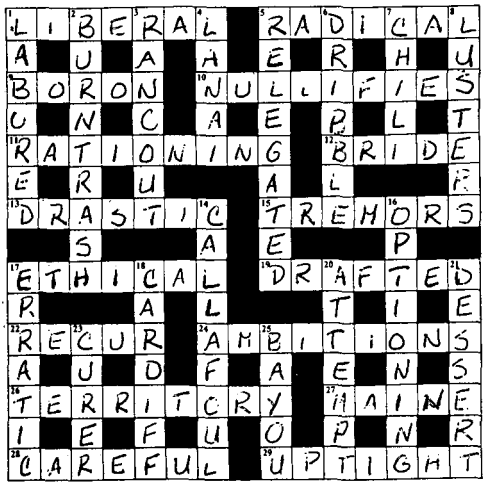
Ouagadougou receives a cable advising them that the superintendent of the Berea school district in Ohio will be visiting them and should be shown the usual courtesies, the routine message (signed VANCE) has gone through many hands and will have been cleared by managers in HEW as well as State—by so many people, in fact, that the school superintendent may be back in Ohio before the cable arrives. (Bledsoe, for example, may be on the clearance list because, seven years ago, a form letter of congratulations from the President to a high school teacher, reportedly retired after 50 years of honorable service, boomeranged when it developed that the teacher had been canned for flashing in the girls' gymnasium; the White House thundered at the bureaucrats and the bureaucrats added Bledsoe's office to the clearance list for anything having to do with high schools—where it has been ever since without having averted any similar embarrassment.) Since most of the officials who must clear a document are busy attending meetings, a given cable sits in one in-box after another, awaiting the series of initials. Yet to allow oneself to be omitted from the clearance list would be to acknowledge a relinquishment of jurisdiction, and he who does the omitting will hear in sharpest terms from the omittee.

Answers to last month's puzzle:



The tables are turned on Bledsoe when *he* drafts a memo to the Assistant Secretary and tries to get it cleared. Although the memo is sent in his boss's name, "Bledsoe" appears at the bottom as the drafting officer, and Bledsoe has to shepherd it through the various obstacles on the clearance list, agonizing over each change someone demands as the price of his initial. (The cruelest blow of all comes when a revised version of the memo is finally sent and the drafting official at the bottom is listed as "Bledsoe/Flanagan,"—which translates to "Bledsoe botched it, but I, Flanagan, fixed it up.")

And so, after a day of rushing from meeting to meeting and, in between, trying to get his memo cleared, suggesting changes in someone else's rather stupid memo and fighting a losing battle with his in-box, Bledsoe can honestly go home and tell his wife that he's really beat. What public service his exhausting activity has accomplished is something else...

Among the more dubious claims made for the Carter civil service "reform" is that, through a carrot and stick approach, it will make middle management "accountable." The truth is, most middle managers in government can not be held "accountable," because there is little for them to account for. They are not managers at all, but placeholders or, as one of them said, "persons of record," initialers of papers and attenders of meetings. That the managerial strata of government have been padded to the point where responsibility is spread around in so thin a patina is not the fault of the GS-15, who is both beneficiary and victim of the glut. And that many of the people who fill these posts are limited is less of a tragedy than the waste of talent and capabilities of those who do have something to offer. A few of the latter will ultimately make it into government's upper crust. Most of them will watch their talent and vigor fade, collect their paychecks, anticipate their pensions and remain prisoners in their velvet cage. ■

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Memo of the Month

UNCLASSIFIED

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

UNITED STATES MISSION - BOGOTA

No.	Subject	Date
78	Chargé's New Meeting Schedule	May 29, 1979

References

TO: All American Employees - All Agencies

FROM: Frank M. Ravndal, Administrative Counselor

The following schedule of weekly meetings will remain in effect until the Ambassador returns in mid-July:

1. The 9:30 a.m. Monday Staff Meeting has been cancelled.
2. A short Staff Meeting will be held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:00 a.m. in the Ambassador's office for those who normally attend the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:00 a.m. meetings.
3. The Military Meeting will be held every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. instead of every Thursday. The Narcotics Meeting will remain the same - every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.
4. The Country Team Meeting will be held every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. (instead of Fridays) in the Fourth Floor Conference Room.

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The Fantasies of Senators' Wives

by Joseph Nocera

"'Have we won?' I asked, groggy.

"'Yes, darlin', you've won,' he said and took me in his arms.

"I looked up at him—he knew how much I wanted this—and said, 'Daddy, do you know what this means? It means that someday I may get to go to Europe.' Nobody in our family had ever been to Europe except for Uncle Orville, who had died there during World War I."

It was election night, 1962, and this is how Marvella Bayh remembered the moment she learned her husband Birch was going to be a United States Senator. Victory had been especially sweet because it was so wholly unexpected; Birch Bayh was young and had never run for statewide office, and the pundits—and his Republican opponent—had predicted he would lose badly. In the euphoria that followed, Marvella thought about what lay ahead. The Bayhs would be moving to Washington, of course, an exciting prospect if for no other reason than the level of achievement it symbolized.

Washington in 1962 also meant the Kennedys, and that too was exciting. Like liberal Democrats everywhere, the Bayhs had admired the President, and like the rest of the country, they were also a little in awe of him and his glamorous family. Now, it seemed certain, they would be spending time with the Kennedys, getting to know them. (Hadn't everyone remarked how much Birch Bayh resembled John Kennedy in his style and vigor and good looks? Hadn't the President himself come to Indiana for a day to campaign for the Democratic candidate?) For Marvella Bayh, it meant that the special world of the capital was about to open up to her; one far

Joseph Nocera is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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different than anything she had known in Oklahoma, where she was born and raised, or Indiana. This would be a world of high-level politics, to be sure, but it would also be a world that included White House receptions, and intimate dinners with Washington celebrities, fancy embassy parties, and weekends at Hickory Hill or Hyannis. And excursions to Europe from time to time, no doubt. It seemed to Marvella that becoming part of this world would make her life full and fun, and she thought at the time that there was nothing she wanted more.

This description of what went through Bayh's mind comes from Bayh herself, or more precisely, from her book, *Marvella: A Personal Journey* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), an autobiography written with Mary Lynn Kotz and scheduled for publication next month. If the idea of a ghost-written book about the life of a senator's wife sounds less than engrossing, guess again. This is a remarkably good book by any measure—engagingly written, at times quite touching, and told with a sense of honesty that puts it well above the standard fare of Washington memoirs.

Marvella Bayh died earlier this year after a long and public battle with cancer, and the last few chapters of her autobiography are a moving account of that battle. Much of the rest of the book is devoted to detailing another fight she had, this one with herself and her role as a senator's wife. Marvella Bayh had a classic case of "political wife's syndrome."

She had grown up fiercely ambitious and very smart. As a high school student, she had traveled the country, entering—and winning—oratory contests. But now, married to a senator, it seemed that all her ambitions, energies and talents were channeled into furthering his career, while she got very little in return. As a "career" for her, it was unfulfilling—clipping newspapers and making speeches was about the closest she ever got to her husband's work. Her family life was equally unsatisfying because Birch was away so often, and even when he was around he was usually so busy he had to fit his family in around a dozen other things. Bayh sums up her difficulties when she describes an interview she and Birch did with Sally Quinn of *The Washington Post* in the summer of 1971. This came at a time when she was about as resentful as she would ever become—morbidly depressed, fighting with her husband and his staff, angry that the time he was spending to put together a presidential campaign was forcing them apart, feeling cut out of his life, taking shots and popping pills to keep herself going. Yet she still had a role to play: "I pasted on a smile, tried to act the part of an energetic candidate's wife," she writes. "'I live, totally, through my husband,' I told [Quinn]. The piece appeared on June 20, showing a surface relationship between typical candidate and wife, guardedly trying to say the Right Thing. She could not have known what lay seething below the surface."

It was a resentment that has, with considerable justification, overcome countless politician's wives, causing, in in some cases, alcoholism (Joan Kennedy), divorce (Betty Talmadge, among the legions), and even outright hatred (Remiglia Brooke). Marvella was neither alcoholic nor hateful, and she stayed willingly married to her husband, but she was frustrated with her life much of the time and embittered some of the time. In this respect, Washington did not provide the full and fun life she had hoped for.

But if the problems of living out the life of the political spouse were ones that she confronted head on, in her life and her book, there is another, much more subtle theme in *Marvella* that she does not confront. Marvella Bayh got fed up with being a chord in the symphony of her husband's life, and, eventually, she did something to change that, getting a paid, visible job as spokesman for the American Cancer Society. But what she never got tired of was knowing that she was part of the Washington she had dreamed about back in 1962. In that sense, she *was* fulfilled. She writes about this quite openly, acknowledging her wonder-

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ment, especially at first, that she was getting to do all these terrific things. Once, Lyndon Johnson held an anniversary party for the Bayhs aboard the *Sequoia*. She writes: "I was so excited. I kept wondering if this could really be happening." And she never lost her lust for travel. The Bayhs, by my count, took 15 trips abroad in a span of 13 years, usually to the the meetings of the Interparliamentary Union, held either in Paris or some other equally alluring city. Marvella loved the hobnobbing with senators and ambassadors, Cabinet secretaries and important columnists. It was, as she describes it, a heady, even a giddy experience those first few years to sit down to dinner surrounded by people whom she had known before only from watching the evening news, and join in their conversations about affairs of state. Later, it was a nice feeling knowing that these people were her friends and that she and Birch had been accepted as one of them. She says she never got over the thrill of being able to call her mother back in Oklahoma with the news that she and Birch were having cocktails with the President that night. On election night, 1962, this had been her fantasy of what Washington would be like, and she never got weary of living it.

The Best Case Scenario

Everyone who moves to Washington comes here with some preconceived notions of what it is going to be like for them—a sort of best case scenario. In this respect, Washington for people associated in some way with the business of government is a lot like New York used to be for people with big dreams or like Hollywood still is for anyone wanting to break into the movies. Unlike the Hollywood hopefuls, however, most of those who come to Washington do not fantasize about getting a chance to "break into the business." Usually moving here is a sign that they have already had some success in their work—an election victory in the case of a politician, a step up for a lawyer joining a Washington firm, a promotion for a lobbyist or a journalist being assigned to the Washington office. But having "made it" in the hinterlands—as politicians, journalists, bureaucrats or businessmen—the victors abandon the scene of their triumphs, and arrive in town fearing they will not be automatically plugged into a respected, powerful group of friends. It's a situation calculated to breed insecurity among the successful—a desire for acceptance on the part of people, like senators and their wives, who would not ordinarily have to worry about such things at their stage and station in life. The Bayhs, for example, were from small towns in rural America, and they wanted to be able to fit into the sophisticated, glamorous world they imagined Washington to be. But they weren't sure if they would be able to do that. Would they be "good enough?" Or would they do the "wrong thing" and be unmasked as unworthies? These are basically silly fears (as Marvella herself decides after she has been accepted in Washington), but they are hardly unique to the Bayhs. It is the rare individual who comes to Washington without any insecurities at all. The Bayhs' fear of social rejection is probably the most common. Others may be beset by equally powerful anxieties. It may be a fear that they won't be able to cut the workload, or that their peers in Congress will think them foolish, or that they just aren't smart enough for Washington—but in any case, even instant VIPs like senators generally come to town having, in some sense, to prove themselves all over again. The way their fantasies are fulfilled and their insecurities are becalmed—and by whom—has more than a little to do with what these people actually accomplish while they are here.

Dinner at Lyndon's

"Washington," writes Marvella, "in the glamorous days of John and Jacqueline Kennedy, was like a smor-

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gasbord with exquisite food from all over the world, and I could not get enough of it." The fulfillment of the Bayhs' Washington dream began right from the start, even before Birch was sworn in, when they came to town to find a house. At a dinner with the Vice-President and his wife, Lyndon Johnson took the newcomers aside and offered some sage advice: buy an expensive house, he said, because what they invest in a house is the only money they'll be able to save. "He couldn't have been more gracious to us," she writes, "making a call to a real-estate friend, even taking us out house-hunting himself, in his limousine, in neighborhoods near his own."

The next day it was lunch with Ethel and Robert Kennedy at Hickory Hill. "I was wearing a nondescript black dress, I remember, a campaign necessity. It made me feel out-of-place among those glamorous women." During lunch, Marvella felt "overawed by the Eastern finesse of the Kennedys. I remember sitting very straight, hoping I wouldn't say 'the wrong thing,' whatever that might be."

A little later, when the Bayhs had begun to settle in, the stream of invitations began to arrive. "In the first six weeks, I found myself at home for only two full days. . . . I accepted every invitation—I thought we were supposed to. Besides, I didn't want to miss anything."

The desire for acceptance in those early days meant being willing to learn how to do things the right way, the sophisticated way. "The right fork or spoon, the correct way to answer an invitation, the right dress to wear—all of these details seemed so important to me. . . ." To make sure of these details, Marvella enrolled in a protocol course given by Mrs. Gladstone Williams, a woman who had taught generations of congressional wives how to do the right thing in Washington. Another step she took to make herself more presentable was to go to a dress shop in Georgetown that had "sent a welcome-to-Washington note to all the new congressional wives. "I have been in Washington a long time' [the note said]. Come around and let me advise you on your wardrobe.'" The advice was swift in coming: "[The owner] soon had my entire closetful of clothes spread around her shop: 'This is worn out, this is too dated, this can be livened by a scarf, this needs to be shortened, this can be remade, this can go to a luncheon at the White House, this to a five-to-seven reception. . . .'" A third step was to hire an interior decorator to make the house presentable. Both the decorator and the dress shop owner became Marvella Bayh's close friends.

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New Kid On The Block

So did Lady Bird Johnson, who was full of sound advice about how to get along in this wonderful new world. In the meantime, Birch Bayh was becoming friends with both the Kennedys and Lyndon Johnson. They appointed him to his first few overseas conferences. Johnson, especially, took Bayh

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under his wing, presiding in the Senate the day of Bayh's first floor speech, thus making it clear to everyone that he was looking out for the new kid on the block. Birch Bayh, according to Marvella, was grateful for that too.

At their most benign, these incidents are simply examples of people being nice to each other. Certainly that is how Marvella Bayh portrays them in the book. Her list of Washington friends would fill pages of this magazine. The favors they do for each other, the parties they hold, are the same sort of things friends do for each other no matter where they live. The parties may be more lavish, and the lifestyle more refined, but still there *is* a sincere element to it all, and friendships really do develop that are lasting and genuine.

On the other hand, people who are fulfilling Washington fantasies for the newcomers like the Bayhs undoubtedly get more out of it than friendship. The most obvious are the dressmaker and interior decorator who get hard cash because of their ability to cultivate the new folks in town. Less obvious, but just as real, is the power a lobbyist, or a Senate leader, or a president can have over his new-found "friends."

One of the friends Marvella mentions, for example, is the former Iranian ambassador, Ardeshir Zahedi. Zahedi is now a rather notorious fellow, since there are supposed to be lists floating around with names of politicians and journalists who had been recipients of his gifts (and a couple of photographs of a senator and a congressman in what are called "compromising positions"). But when the Shah ruled Iran, Zahedi ruled the Washington social circuit. His parties were legendary; his friends were in important positions all over town. What he got out of it was simple: a willingness on the part of journalists and top government officials to give Iran the benefit of any doubts. The Shah did awfully well for himself in the American press and the American government, and Zahedi helped to see to that by insuring that he had a lot of friends, and by fulfilling a lot of Washington fantasies. The Bayhs were perfect fodder for his kind of friendship. In their never-ending thirst for new travel experiences, Marvella recounts breathlessly, they once went to Iran, "and I had a private meeting with the Empress. . . . On returning we were invited to a dinner at the Iranian Embassy by her ambassador, Ardeshir Zahedi, who had also become our friend."

(Indeed, the travel fantasy seems to be one that lasts long after some of the other luster of Washington has begun to wear off; one can't help suspecting that it is on the minds of politicians while they are running for office, that it plays an important, if unexpressed role in the image of post-election life that spurs them to run in the first place. The best, latest example of a politician with an insatiable travel fetish is Washington mayor Marion Barry, who seems to want to be out of town as often as possible. During the Washington blizzard last winter, he was sunning in the Caribbean; more recently, while the D.C. budget has been struggling to make its way through Capitol Hill, Barry has been traveling throughout Africa on a trip the purpose of which is, to be kind, obscure.)

Taken In

In Marvella Bayh's case, the blinders she wore in pursuit of her fantasy life did her considerable personal harm. "I tried to convince myself," she writes, "that the compensations were worth the expenditure of energy. Look 'how far I had come' in two years, I kept telling myself. I was hungry for experience. I had traveled to Europe, talked to ambassadors, danced with the President. I was even wearing dressmaker's copies of exclusive designer clothes that two years ago, I'd never even heard about. At formal dinners, I was entertaining people who'd been born to luxury, whom I'd held in awe, when two years ago I didn't know a fish fork from a finger bowl." For her, the desire to lead the

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fish fork and finger bowl life was enough to allow her to continue in that other life she hated—that of the senator's wife. And that is sad enough.

But, more important, their friendships in and around the government, to some degree, inevitably influenced what the Bayhs thought. The Vice President who takes a freshman senator from Indiana under his wing is going to get the same thing Zahedi gets—the benefit of any doubts. There will be a greater willingness to see his side of the story, or to empathize with his position. If you must criticize him, it will be muted, "responsible"—nothing that would keep him from inviting you back to his dinner table.

Lyndon Johnson, of course, was the master at cultivating this kind of friendship—there was enough of the psychologist in him to know what every new senator's expectations of Washington were and how to fulfill them. With Robert Byrd, who didn't care much for dinner parties, it was letting Byrd know that he was a member of the Senate "club." For Birch Bayh, it was letting him be the President's close friend and showing him how to get along socially in Washington.

And, unwittingly, *Marvella: A Personal Journey* gives us a look at how Bayh responded. When he was President, beleaguered by criticisms of the Vietnam war, Johnson's ability to play Bayh like a violin kept the Indiana senator from wavering in his support of Johnson's war policies. LBJ did it with quiet, friendly seduction. He had Bayh over for regular talks. He offered Marvella a job at the Democratic National Committee, something designed to make her an ally as well. He let both Bayhs in on "the agony" he was going through. Here's one sequence of events described in *Marvella*: "On February 13, we were invited to the White House with a group... and the President, Bob McNamara, Hubert Humphrey and Dean Rusk briefed the men on Vietnam. It began as a social evening...." On March 13, the Bayhs were back at the White House again, this time for an unofficial dinner. A few months later, the Bayhs and the Johnsons spent a weekend at Camp David. The men stayed up late, after the fun of the day had ended, to discuss the war. The next day, Johnson announced that an additional 50,000 men were being sent to Vietnam, and Birch Bayh stuck with him, even as his fellow liberals were turning against Johnson and the war. (Even Bayh's wife, by this time, was against the war; perhaps that was because she had not been privy to those high-level discussions the men were so fond of. Yet her friendship with Johnson was such that she wonders at one point whether she would have been able to tell Johnson about her opposition if she had taken the job he had offered. Since she never told him "unofficially," it is hard to imagine that she would have.) Johnson's playing to the friendship of the Bayhs wasn't necessarily entirely cynical. He undoubtedly liked being able to have friends whom he could tell his troubles to and who would stick with him. But their empathy for him seemed to weigh heavily on them. They *knew* the President, so they sympathized with him.

In 1968, at the height of the anti-war movement, Birch Bayh was running for reelection, which meant that Marvella was by his side. After all this time in Washington, surrounded by her friends, but especially having spent so much time with the President, she recalls being stunned at the vehemence of people's feelings toward Johnson. "I was shocked at the depth of the anti-Johnson feeling I found, even among our own campaign workers," she writes. "One of our best supporters walked out on the State of the Union speech telecast.... He said people all over Indiana believed that Johnson was lying to them. If the people only knew the agony Johnson was going through, I thought."

In their first term in Washington, the Bayhs' fantasies had, in large part, been fulfilled. They had supped with the famous and seen the world. They had been the friends of two presidents. For us, and for them, maybe it would have been better if they hadn't been. ■

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The 'Whip-His-Ass' Story, or The Gang That Couldn't Leak Straight

by Eleanor Randolph

For those advisers of Jimmy Carter who had been praying for a transmigrational miracle six months before the first presidential primaries, there was a special significance to the night of June 11. That was the pivotal evening in American history when big John Wayne closed his eyes in a California hospital and galloped into the final sunset, while at about the same time in Washington, President Carter suddenly drew himself up to his full five-foot seven-inch height at a White House dinner and announced to those around him: "If Kennedy runs, I'll whip his ass."

It was supposed to be the surfacing of the new spirit of Jimmy Carter, a carefully-planned sign that he was a tough, strong, mountain of a man, not the presidential pipsqueak a lot of people imagined. Nobody planned it that way, of course, but if big John was dead, then long live big Jimmy. Unfortunately, the way his staff dressed him up in a cowboy suit, he ended up reminding people of Gabby Hayes.

The early signal that this new Carter would be stepping all over his lasso was the difficulty he had leaking his message to the press, the public, and the Kennedys. In a city where a person in power can whisper confidences to his mate at night and read them in the paper the next morning, suddenly Carter kept finding people who kept a secret.

His first try at telling the world he would whip Teddy in 1980, as *The New York Times* so demurely put it, had come the previous week when he told a group of Georgians, mostly from that state's congressional delegation, of his threat. Carter dropped the word and waited for the ground to shake on Capitol Hill. Instead, not a peep. The Georgians quietly tucked the information away and went back to work. As one person who was at the meeting said later, "Frankly, I just forgot about it."

By the beginning of the next week, Carter was determined to try his new maxim on the less forgetful and the more disloyal. So he sprung it, at the June 11 White House dinner, on Rep. Toby Moffett, Rep. William Brodhead, and Rep. Thomas Downey. But even these congressmen were prepared to be diplomatic about the matter and dismiss it.

As the congressmen recalled afterward, one asked the President what he planned to do about the groundswell of support for Senator Kennedy. Carter replied that he felt great and that "if Kennedy runs, I'll whip his ass."

"Excuse me, Mr. President, what did you say?" Rep. Brodhead asked a little incredulously.

"I don't think the President wants to repeat what he said," interjected Moffett, obviously trying to save Carter any embarrassment.

However, at that point, perhaps worried that even this group would not do his unspoken bidding, the President

Eleanor Randolph is a reporter for The Los Angeles Times.

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piped up, "Yes, I do. If Kennedy runs, I'll whip his ass."

The next 24 hours were the Carter administration's most recent example of a kind of watermelon-through-a-sieve school of leaking, the previous example being the time that Press Secretary Jody Powell was trying to spread a little dirt on Senator Charles Percy. Powell told former *Chicago Sun-Times* bureau chief Loye Miller that Percy had used a corporate plane illegally during his last campaign. The trouble with that leak was, first, that Powell forgot to make the leak off-the-record, so the *Sun-Times* carefully said that Powell was the one who offered the information. Second, the information turned out to be wrong.

The "whip-his-ass" quote first slipped into the public domain June 12 when Brodhead's administrative aide called William Mitchell, Washington correspondent for *The Detroit Free Press*. Mitchell wrote it for the next day's paper, and the *Free Press* played it cautiously on page 15.

In the meantime, Frank Moore, Carter's thick-of-thumb congressional liaison, called Downey and said, according to Downey: "Don't be surprised if you get some calls later tonight. We've given your name as someone seated at the President's table, and we'd like you to confirm the story." Then, Moore passed out Downey's unlisted telephone number to several inquiring reporters. When the reporters called Downey, however, they found that he was not only willing to confirm the quote, he was also willing to confirm to at least a few of them that Frank Moore had asked him to do it.

In the end, it all simply looked silly. Kennedy quickly outplayed Carter by replying, "I think what he meant to say was that he was going to whip inflation." *The Miami Herald* editorialized: "Who's whipping whose ass?" Worst of all for Carter, there were the congregations of people below the Bible belt who had thought that born-again Jimmy would not talk that way, at least never again after the *Playboy* interview during the campaign. The Plains Baptist Church, of which he is still an ex-officio member, considered reprimanding him: their Jimmy was supposed to be a good boy even in the sinful center of American government, an upright imitation of Harry Truman who would go up there to Washington, the nation's capital, and give 'em heck.

In fact, it is not Carter's nature to talk about whipping anybody's ass, especially Kennedy's. The President is the kind of man who may occasionally curse, but he doesn't cuss well. He's always had the manner of a certified public accountant trying to be one of the boys.

Carter's aides probably should have taken some counsel from the fact that the Georgian congressmen—most of whom wish Carter well—did not let it out that he was trying to throw sand in Teddy's face. It was an act of warning and congressional friendship, and as one former Carter aide offered later: "If your friends won't do your leaking for you, it's not a good idea to trust your enemies." ■

The Quality of Federal Policymaking: Programmed Failure in Public Housing
Eugene J. Meehan

The inadequacies in federal policymaking can be illustrated in many areas but are particularly conspicuous in the field of public housing. Meehan examines all the central features of the public housing program from its origins in New Deal legislation through the late 1970s. Using the public housing program in St. Louis as a case study, he links the federal policies to their effects at the point of impact. His conclusions are damning: no learning, no improvement, almost indifference to consequences. In fact, he shows that the government even tends to ignore the effects of policy on the general public when considering policy changes.
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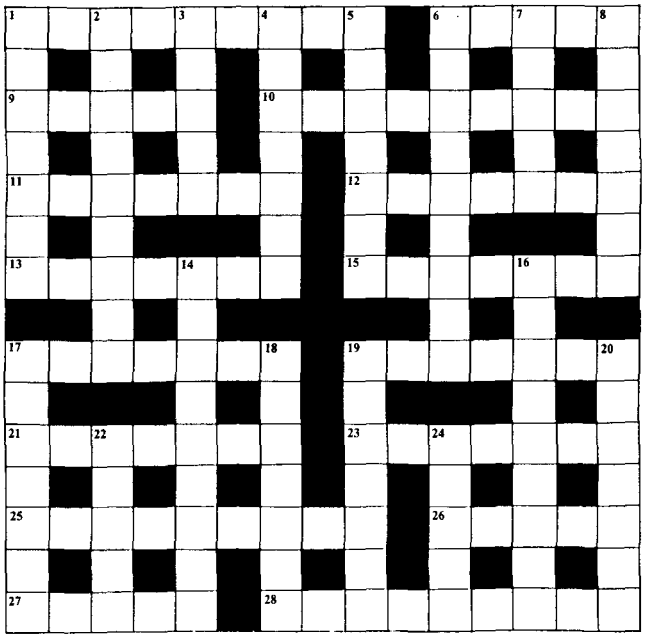
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. In statue a backdrop for Presidential action? (4,5)
6. Fats comes back with Frank's head a winner from 1 Across. (5)
9. Frank makes a sacrifice around 50. (5)
10. Oddball makes rare catch. (9)
11. He can cut the corn somehow. (7)
12. Volume with weird ode in it. (7)
13. Why it's a confused direction. (4,3)
15. Crewmen disturbed by air loss. (7)
17. Little saint poked around working space. (7)
19. Top spot for First Lady's nap. (7)
21. Looked around and made point without you. (7)
23. Benefactor randomly drew one. (7)
25. Pastime in which to use this cleat. (9)
26. Sharpens in a drippy way? (5)
27. Tires but reads strangely. (5)
28. They are superior despite tricky small no-good element. (9)

DOWN

1. It can be made into loser at 1 Across. (7)
2. Arrange an unmoist recreation area. (9)
3. This uncle is no real treat! (5)
4. Evil fellow could be good governor? (7)
5. Places to store undergarments? (7)
6. Wild zest alibi to calm things down. (9)
7. From CIA, it involves second stage. (3,2)
8. From 1 Across they start rockets but end careers. (7)
14. Drew beast around fashionable furniture. (9)
16. To crush with point control under over. (9)
17. With internal blemish did throw out. (7)
18. Increase in motor knock is window dressing. (7)
19. Writer about New England *mores*. (7)
20. Makes light and runs not awkwardly. (5,2)
22. Alternative article in conjunction. (5)
24. Pin down in shadow election. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.

Answers to last month's puzzle on page 42.

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What's Wrong With Policy Analysis

by Michael Nelson

"Policy analysis" is a lot like "software" and "open education"—we've all heard of it and are at least vaguely aware that it is a growth industry, but we don't know quite what it is. Not to worry—nobody else does either. Policy analysts prefer not to be pinned down, even among themselves. "At the Graduate School of Public Policy in Berkeley," writes political scientist Aaron Wildavsky, the school's first dean and still its leading intellectual light, "I discouraged discussions on the meaning of policy analysis. Hundreds of conversations on this slippery subject had proven futile, even exasperating, possibly dangerous." When it came up in class, Wildavsky found, "student anxiety rose alarmingly. The classroom crackled with tension." Be that as it may, Berkeley and several other universities now offer masters and doctoral degrees—a sure sign of a would-be profession on the make—in a field that, according to the delphic Wildavsky, "could be learned but not explained." *That* is something to worry about.

Though policy analysis may not be explainable, the general idea seems to be that rigorous look-sees by policy analysts will result in government programs that work as well in the field as the drawing-board models say they will. But whether that's what actually happens when the policy analysts take on a case is a story better told by taking a little look-see ourselves, in this instance at the program evaluation of CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973.

CETA is a logical choice. According to Erwin Hargrove, a Vanderbilt political scientist whose Urban Institute monograph on "The Bureaucratic Politics of Evaluation" is the source of the brief account that follows, evaluation was one of the main things CETA originally was about. What the act had done was to take the money the federal government was spending on its own rather rigid and often overlapping job training programs, some 30 or 40 of which might be operating indepen-

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dently in a given city, and distribute it to local governments in lump sums. The locals' new task was, in effect, to plant a hundred flowers, to each set up programs that conformed to the wants and needs of their individual communities. This seemed a noble experiment; after years of doing it their way, the feds wanted to find out if local governments, given a relatively free hand, could do it better.

The Labor Department's assignment was to find out which of the flowers were blooming and pass the lesson on to the cities where CETA was meeting with less success. In order for its CETA program evaluation to be useful, then, it would have to do two distinct things: first, find out which cities were doing well—that is, which ones' graduates were landing decent jobs after training—and then discover what it was about those cities' programs that made them better than others. Gauge the impact, in other words, then learn the process that made the program successful. This may seem obvious to you and me, but apparently it was not to the three units in the Labor Department responsible for designing CETA's evaluation strategy as it cranked up for implementation in the spring of 1974. The policy analysts were at work.

One of the Labor Department units was the evaluation staff—the "E" in ASPER, the office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Evaluation and Research. ASPER was made up of economists, most of whom sneered at the political and bureaucratic people in the rest of the department. What they wanted, virtually to the exclusion of all else, was a study that would measure the *impact* half of the evaluation, the part that told what percentage of job trainees got and kept good jobs. They cared about the numbers; what they could not have cared less about was the *process* half of the question—the whys and wherefores that explained how come some cities' programs were working better than others. The reason, Hargrove reports, is that while the first task was suitable to their quantitative economic models, the latter was not. "Their methods, as econometricians, did not permit them to easily suggest how to link process data to findings about impact . . . Therefore, their energies went into safeguarding the methodological correctness of the plan."

ASPER's antagonists in this story were the Manpower Administration's CETA program people; let's call them MA-CETA. These were the fellows who had written the CETA regulations shortly after the law was enacted and now were charged with rewriting them in line with the program's actual performance. The problem was that quite unlike ASPER, MA-CETA was uninterested in impact but desperate to know about process. To find out about performance, it should have wanted to know what ASPER wanted to know—whether, in the end, CETA trainees got jobs—as well as about the mechanics and the politics of the thing: Were local governments really consolidating and coordinating training programs as the law and the regulations required? Were they letting citizens participate in the planning? Handing out contracts to hacks? Discriminating? But for the MA-CETA people, success meant only that the regs they had written made enough sense—and sealed off enough potentially glaring loopholes—to keep away the Golden Fleece awards and James J. Kilpatrick columns. "Their commitment," writes Hargrove, "was to the health and continuity of the program under their charge." To them, the result of the program was almost beside the point.

Enter The Schlimazel

The interesting thing about ASPER and MA-CETA was that they did not actually do any evaluating themselves; they just made demands about how it should be done. That is where OPER—the Manpower Administration's Office of Policy, Evaluation and Research—came in. It was OPER that was supposed to come up with the comprehensive evaluation that linked impact and process, the what-worked-and-why study that, however vital to CETA's success, nobody else in the

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department seemed to have an institutional stake in. It was OPER that ASPER and MA-CETA talked to, not each other—and talked down to at that: ASPER regarded OPER as being full of "awkward" and "not methodologically sophisticated people" and MA-CETA considered it, not altogether incorrectly, as a haven for its burnt-out cases. And it was OPER, you will be unsurprised to hear, that ended up the schlimazel, the spillee when the two schlemiels spilled their soup.

Here, in condensed form, is how that happened: Early in 1974, ASPER proposed its impact study, MA-CETA its process study, and OPER gamely tried to split the difference. Unfortunately, the compromise evaluation plan it came up with had the vices of both, but the virtues of neither. Its purpose, writes Hargrove, "was to gather broad impressions about the changes that CETA was bringing in institutions and delivery of service." The plan devised by OPER guaranteed that the information collected would be too vague and general to fulfill MA-CETA's goal of finding out how local governments were putting CETA into effect. It was a study that would report on "trends" in CETA, but not whether they made any sense or not. As for the ASPER crowd, they weren't very happy either. What concrete data would be collected wouldn't necessarily measure the program's impact, although, notes Hargrove, "the documents stated that the link would occur in the future. This vagueness made ASPER uneasy." But angriest of all was the CETA budget examiner at the Office of Management and Budget who "blew my stack" and sent the OPER plan back, threatening to cut off CETA's evaluation funds if OPER didn't come up with a better one. The problem he saw was the obvious one, a "lack of interrelationships," meaning that the proposed study wouldn't link the process and the impact, and therefore wouldn't do much of anything to uncover which CETA programs were working and why.

OMB's rejection sent everybody back to the drawing board, but there they stayed. Months went by; CETA money began flooding out to local governments; Congress started asking for reports on what was happening. So a steering committee was formed and OPER drafted another compromise study; this too, was shot down, and for the same reasons. The flavor of the argument is captured in this exchange between the antagonists. ASPER: "We still have the basic problem that until we develop a working model of the CETA system, it will not be possible to determine the appropriate methodology and inputs and outputs." MA-CETA: We have "a simple need to know in the field. The ASPER view is 'Let's not worry about how it works; let's analyze it correctly.'" OPER, Hargrove points out, "was caught in the middle."

By this time, snow was falling. CETA's first birthday passed in December, and still no evaluation plan. In desperation, a final compromise was struck: *all* the studies would be done. ASPER would get its 'are-the-trainees-landing-jobs?' report, MA-CETA its short-run analysis of the politics and the regs. Each report would be totally unconnected to the other and thus virtually useless, but no matter. OPER, meanwhile, patched together its latest version of the middle-of-the-road study, so battered by the months of contention that no one really expected to learn anything from it. The whole was to be considerably less than the sum of its parts.

It is this sort of absurd struggle that has given the CETA program the reputation it enjoys today. More important, the CETA story is, in a nutshell, as good an example as you'll find of what's wrong with policy analysis, at least in its professional guise. The battle between ASPER and MA-CETA, between the economists and the politicos, can be seen as representative of a larger, undeclared war within the field of policy analysis over what strategy it should take to best attain the glories of professional status. Viewed that way, the CETA evaluation fiasco is merely a taste of things to come. Viewed *that* way, we are all OPER.

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Finesse vs. Flattery

The war is between the nation's two leading schools of public policy, one at Berkeley, the other at what Californians have taken to calling "the Berkeley of the East," Harvard. Harvard is the ASPER of this war. Its graduate program in policy analysis, administered by the Kennedy School of Government, is economic not only in content but in tone. Complain to a Harvard policy analyst that waiting in a tollbooth line in 95-degree heat is about to ruin your Labor Day weekend and he may well tell you that according to his model, based on queuing theory, the optimum number of tollbooths are open from a cost-benefit standpoint. The problem, as Seth Kupferberg diagnosed it in a recent *New Republic* article, is that the Harvards "present as technical, beyond the competence of ordinary people, problems that are basically political—conflicts of values where microeconomics can't provide a 'right' answer." To the Kennedy School people, "analytical methods" are what count; "political realities" are messy, unquantifiable things that sometimes muck things up. John Lindsay learned the limits of such analysis when all his Ivy League advisers told him their models showed that he could close several New York precinct houses without any loss in citizen safety. What the models did not show was that in a lot of angry citizens' minds, safety meant having a police station nearby, never mind the costs and benefits. That was a "psychic factor," as the Harvards tend to call non-economic things that don't fit in their models.

Berkeley's Graduate School of Public Policy did not come on the scene until 1968, 29 years after the Kennedy School, but it quickly took aim at its eastern rival. Microeconomics and quantitative modeling were all well and good, Dean Wildavsky declared, "but they would not be enough. Informal examination of the fate of policy analyses revealed that most analytic studies had been rejected by the organizations for which they were intended." Berkeley's reformation would be based on the doctrine, not unlike that of the MA-CETA people, that recognizing "political realities" was paramount. Writes Wildavsky: "Because political feasibility tends to overwhelm analytic contributions, analysts had become embittered. Getting organizations to use policy analysis was a major part of the solution." And how to do this? Simple really—by having policy analysts reassure the agency they worked for that they posed no threat, by accepting its worth and welfare as a given. "Efforts to make organizational considerations an integral part of policy analysis, rather than an afterthought, are essential," according to Wildavsky. Analysis must be "selective, in that it is oriented to particular people (in specific slots within locatable levels of an organization)." Translated, that means the Berkeley School would shape their analyses to please the people they were doing them for—and be proud of it. In the end, Wildavsky noted ominously, "evaluation must lead to programs that connect the interests of political leaders to the outcomes of governmental actions; otherwise, they will reject evaluation and the people who do it." The oddest thing about this call for policy analysts to play up to their superiors is that it is contained in a book called *Speaking Truth to Power.*

It is hard to say which of these two strategies for securing the professional status of policy analysts is more likely to succeed; as strategies, they each have their strengths and weaknesses. The Harvards certainly have taken the bolder route, deciding to descend from on high with their models, theories, and jargon, on the gamble that people in government will be bowled over by their incomprehensible but authoritative-sounding methods and manners instead of—to mix a metaphor—declaring that their emperor has no clothes. It is too early to tell if Harvard will pull it off or not; apparently its graduates have pretty much taken over the Department of Energy, but wheth-

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er this represents their first triumph or, as seems equally probable in light of the department's brief history, their final one, is unclear.

The Berkeleys have adopted a less risky strategy. By promising never to offend anyone in the agencies that employ them—indeed, by promising to help the top agency people dope out the future so they can plot their advances—the Berkeley School's graduates are unlikely to rouse powerful opposition. On the other hand, they are also unlikely to impress anyone with their indispensability, as high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats well may conclude that they can predict "political realities" better than freshly-minted Ph.D's. Personally, I am aware of two political predictions that Dean Wildavsky has made: that no president would propose a guaranteed income plan (this a few months before Richard Nixon did so), and, well into Watergate, that Nixon never would be impeached. He described each, at the time he made it, as being based on his hard-boiled, realistic assessment of how politics really works.

By now it should be clear that our rooting interest in this fight is in a double knockout. Neither the Harvard nor the Berkeley schools of thought on policy analysis are likely to do the rest of us any good, and, as in the CETA battle, when the quarrel spills over into government itself they even may do us considerable harm. Does this mean that we should not bother to seek new ways to evaluate how government programs are working? Not at all. But the last thing we need is a new profession to do it for us, even if it lacks the specific ills of the Harvards and Berkeleys.

Professional Interest

Why this aversion to a policy profession per se? Because when skilled workers professionalize, a couple of bad things happen to them. They start expecting the same kind of deference other professionals get, the same high

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regard for their superior knowledge, their expertise. This is dangerous enough in a democracy where policy decisions, ultimately, are supposed to be a matter of politics, not professional status. But, in order to advance their status goals, professionals also develop a high stake in the policies of the organizations that employ them and, inevitably, in the clientele groups that sustain those organizations and policies. The Berkeley School is unique in elevating this dependency to a virtue, but any policy analysis profession, whatever shape it tried to take, would be vulnerable to it.

The best evidence of this can be found at that bastion of non-partisan, disinvolved policy analysis, the Brookings Institution, where another CETA study has been going on. This one concerns the public service employment program that was tacked on to CETA during the 1974 recession and has drawn fire ever since. One of the charges about CETA that has raised the most hackles, in large part because it has been made not only by conservative politicians but in scholarly journals, is that local governments have been "substituting," that is, using half or more of their federal money to pay CETA workers they otherwise would be paying themselves. If true, that means that CETA money is not creating many new jobs after all and instead is being entirely, even illegally, misspent. To get to the bottom of all this, Congress in 1976 passed the Bellmon amendment, which required that the government's National Commission for Manpower Policy hire out for a study that would decide the issue once and for all. (The commission, though formally independent, was funded out of the Secretary of Labor's discretionary budget.)

Rather than write a "request for proposals," the research equivalent of competitive bidding, the Commission went straight to Brookings or, more precisely, to Richard Nathan. Nathan accepted the grant, hired on several assistants, and after completing the study announced that "substitution" not only took up less than half of CETA's program, it amounted to less than 20 per cent. As it happened, his two reports, released in February 1978 and March 1979, came shortly before key votes on CETA, and bearing the Brookings stamp, influenced Congress to back away from proposals to cut back on CETA severely. Indeed, the Labor Department gets a six for political "savy" in its handling of Nathan's first report. A large conference was called to announce the glad tidings while the results of a less pleasant study that the Labor Department had commissioned from the Urban Institute were simultaneously released, much more quietly, in a "technical" report. The Urban Institute people had argued that substitution was two to three times the Brookings figure.

As a fan of public service employment, I hope substitution is as low as Nathan says it is. But I don't believe it. I don't believe it because there is a large fuzzy category in his reports—some 30 per cent—called "program maintenance." It is made up of "former" local government jobs that are now filled by CETA people; and if you were to add that 30 per cent to Nathan's 20 per cent, you might well decide that substitution was as big a problem as the critics were saying it was. Nathan, of course, says you shouldn't do that. In his judgment, "program maintenance" jobs really are new jobs because his researchers concluded that the mayors would have eliminated them if it had not been for the federal money. *In his judgment.* Despite all the graphs and charts, all the policy-analysis-ese, this is not scientifically validated truth, though Nathan's reports, in the manner of most policy analyses, don't exactly proclaim that fact.

Why should we doubt Nathan's judgment? In part because, since he arrived at Brookings, Nathan had made a career out of getting large grants to study how the Nixon administration's "New Federalism" policies—first, revenue sharing, then the "community development block grants"—were doing. On the whole, they were doing quite well according to Nathan, but then why shouldn't they be? Nathan's job in the Nixon admin-

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istration had been to develop and promote the New Federalism. A disgruntled former staffer with the Commission for Manpower Policy says that the likelihood of an equally "responsible" Nathan report on CETA, the third New Federalism policy that became law, had no little influence on the Commission's decision to give him the grant. "'Fix' is the wrong word—it's just that the Commission's definition of 'responsible' excludes anything that might suggest drastic policy changes."

Indeed, in this light, the Nathan methodology is especially interesting. According to an official in the President's Executive Office, "Dick's people would go to the mayor or some other city official and ask 'Would you have funded this position with local money if CETA wasn't available?' The mayor could either say yes, which means admitting he has done something illegal, or he can say no, which is what Dick wanted to hear anyway."

Partly because of its dependency on government contracts like Nathan's, the Brookings imprimatur is said to be worth less than it used to be. Until recently, Brookings folk would lump "policy research" into two categories: "of Brookings quality" and everything else. Brookings prided itself on deriving less than ten per cent of its income from federal funds; Kermit Gordon, its president, said in 1972 that he slept better at night knowing that the Board of Trustees had set a 15 per cent ceiling on such funding. Soon after, the stock market nosedived and Brookings took a bath. The Board lifted the ceiling and, by 1978, federal contracts like Nathan's were providing 21 per cent of Brookings' income, almost as much as its own endowment. A Brookings officer put his finger on the consequences of all this when he complained that the Institution was becoming "almost a consulting firm" and worried "how freely critical we can be of government policies or agencies when we hope to get money from them next year."

I should point out that there is nothing necessarily sinister in any of this; Nathan, who sincerely sees benefit in the New Federalism he was instrumental in creating, Brookings, which more than ever appreciates his grant-getting abilities, and the Commission, which naturally wants "responsible" studies, undoubtedly all believe in what they are doing and saying. But the danger of professionalism in policy analysis is precisely that well-intentioned people develop too many personal and organizational stakes in the way policies presently work, and it is too easy for them, with the purest of hearts, to buttress each other with money and status on the one side, and reassuring "analysis" on the other, remaining earnestly ignorant of the real problems they are supposed to uncover.

And professional policy analysts develop interests, not only in their individual policies or institutions, but also in their own favorite strategy for professionalization itself. The result is turf wars like the one now going on between the Harvards and the Berkeleys, as the look-down-your-nose boys duke it out with the champions of what might be called the "scholarship of sycophancy." At some point one of these schools will probably win this war, and in the aftermath, the victorious dogma will be set in stone, a model for all to follow who wish to "make it" in the field of policy analysis. What will be lost forever, if it isn't already, is any kind of analysis or evaluation that includes common sense and dogged curiosity among its elements. Common sense enough to know that numbers alone aren't the whole answer, nor understanding "political realities" to the exclusion of all other factors. You need both. What you also need is an unflagging willingness to dig, to put down the computer tape or the political theory book, and to go out into the offices and neighborhoods to look at why programs are or aren't working. It's not an impossible task, nor even a particularly difficult one for a person of reasonable reportorial and analytic ability, and graduate school is not necessarily the only place to learn how to do it. In the end, "policy analysis" is another profession we would be better off without. ■

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Richard Reeves on Political Books

The President of the United States read some polls in June and decided that America was down on itself. The authority for the decline of the West was the President's pollster, Patrick Caddell. Caddell's evidence was random interviews with Americans who said, as they usually do, that they thought the country was going to hell in a basket. What was unusual in Caddell's surveys was that the respondents also thought their own lives were in decline along with the nation's future. It used to be that in such random samplings Americans would say the country was in trouble, but I'm all right, Pat.

So, a president finally admitted that he makes up his mind by the numbers. But what if the numbers are wrong? In *Great American Dreams,* to be published this month by Simon and Schuster, Robert G. Kaiser and Jon Lowell say that Caddell doesn't know what he's talking about—and neither does Jimmy Carter.

"The idea that a large proportion of Americans think that their lives are pretty terrific is a missing element in most contemporary social or political analysis, but it is a fact," Kaiser and Lowell wrote after months of interviewing "Middle Americans." "The 'conservatism' so many politicians claim to see is really something much simpler than politics; it is *contentment* with the way things have been going, and reluctance to allow much change. . . . Americans from backgrounds that would have put them in the peasantry in the Old World, discovered that you didn't need references to buy a Cadillac or take a vacation in Florida. In fact, because the Great American Dream still lived, you could actually move to Florida or some other place where it never snowed and become a new breed of American pioneer reinventing yourself and your style of life in the process."

Kaiser and Lowell—respectively a *Washington Post* and a *Newsweek* correspondent—studied Middle America by sitting in one place and interviewing the folks who happened to come by. The place was Las Vegas—the gaudy, happy, tasteless Mecca of the 110,000,000 Americans in the economic middle. (The authors feel their book fairly represents Americans, the silent majority, who are in less than the top five per cent but more than the presumably dreamless bottom 40 per cent.)

This is a superficial book—interviews in a Studs Terkel manner mixed

Richard Reeves is the author of Convention. *His column is a regular feature of* The Washington Monthly.

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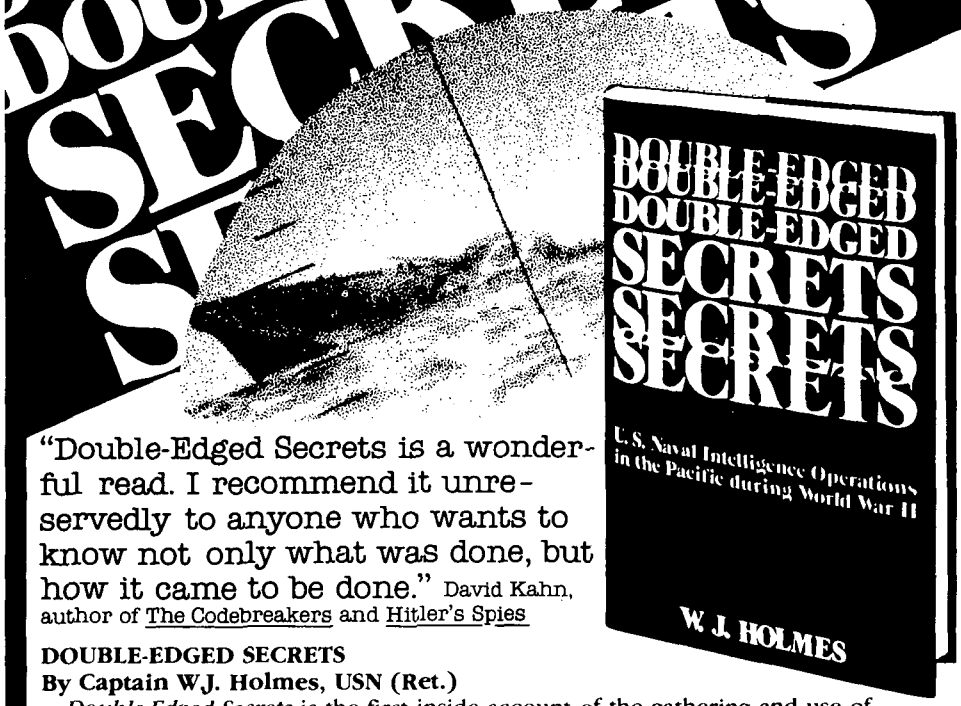
DOUBLE-EDGED SECRETS



"Double-Edged Secrets is a wonderful read. I recommend it unreservedly to anyone who wants to know not only what was done, but how it came to be done." David Kahn, author of The Codebreakers and Hitler's Spies

DOUBLE-EDGED SECRETS
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Double-Edged Secrets is the first inside account of the gathering and use of intelligence at Pearl Harbor between 1941 and 1945. It is a story that few men living today could tell in the first person, for it covers incidents of the Pacific War that could not be otherwise recorded in those hectic days. Fewer still could write of them as brilliantly as has Captain Holmes.

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with some sharp journalistic perceptions. It's obvious—but that, in fact, makes it quite valuable. Most social and political commentary does focus on change, on dissonance, assuming that informed readers already know the obvious.

What is obvious about America? According to Kaiser and Lowell: "Most of the 110 million or so people who inhabit Middle America are beneficiaries of 'upward mobility'—they feel they are living better than their parents did, usually much better. The old palaver about the Great American Dream isn't palaver to them; it actually happened. . . . 'If you work hard there is almost nothing you can't accomplish.' We heard that line again and again with only slight variations in wording or syntax. This notion provides both justification for the accomplishments of those who have accomplished, and an explanation to (or at least an explanation for) those who don't. . . . The real reason Congress votes against tax reform is that Americans aren't really interested in punishing rich people. Americans are interested in *becoming* rich people."

Then why do polls put down America?

"Both [journalism] and the timely polls obscure the fundamental fact about contemporary Middle America: it lives outside the issues, problems, and conflicts of the day. Of course there are exceptions—for example, when school busing comes to one's own neighborhood, or when the rate of inflation soars—but they are exceptions. The pundits regularly tell us that the country is up in arms over this or that, but in fact Middle Americans are rarely up in arms over anything at all.

"If Mr. Gallup sends his representatives into the country to ask about some hot issue of the day, he will get answers. Americans don't like to look foolish when asked a serious question and many of them welcome the opportunity to vent their spleen or wisdom. If the pollster appears at the door to ask about taxes he is likely to hear (surprise!) that taxes are too high. When asked to rank the nation's problems in order of their gravity (usually from a list of problems handily provided), Americans respond—depending on the season and on what issues Cronkite has recently emphasized, among other factors—that inflation or crime, or whatever, is the overriding problem of the day. The results of these polls are 'accurate,' but also profoundly misleading, because they don't reflect the fundamental contentment with the world that is typical of Middle America."

There are, of course, still unfulfilled Great American Dreams, but they are not political or social. They may not even be economic. What Middle Americans now want, according to Kaiser and Lowell, is to "be somebody." "There is no American Dream more widely shared than this," the authors say, presenting people who are satisfied financially and disinterested politically but are frustrated because no one really notices them in mass America.

Kaiser and Lowell are on to something. Jimmy Carter and the other doom-sayers are probably going too far. During the 1972 presidential campaign, I went back to my old neighborhood in Jersey City, a place where the adults of my memory worked with their backs and their hands and voted straight Democratic. I was stunned by the changes I found. There were new driveways, and cars and boats in them—on a street where the word "vacation" had no meaning when I was a kid. The sons and daughters of the laborers and mechanics were out in the suburbs—lawyers and the wives of dentists. Now, George McGovern, the candidate of their party, was telling these old people, the parents of my generation, that America didn't work. They thought he was crazy. The promise of America—the American Dream—had been fulfilled for them and for their children. They despised Richard Nixon, but they voted for him that year rather than vote for a fool. The fact is, as Kaiser and Lowell rediscovered, that for most of its people, America works. ■

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political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in September

Alice: The Life and Times of Alice Roosevelt Longworth. Howard Teichmann. Prentice-Hall, $12.95.

Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW. August Meier, Elliott Rudwick. Oxford, $14.95.

The Bureau: My Thirty Years in Hoover's FBI. William C. Sullivan with Bill Brown. Norton, $12.95. Having a self-serving memoir published two years after you've died is quite a trick, but William Sullivan appears to have pulled it off. Sullivan was an FBI agent for 30 years, rising to be head Commie-chaser and later the number-three man in the bureau before being ousted in 1971 in a dispute with Hoover. Six years later he died in a hunting accident, but by then he had given enough material to ghost-writer and friend, Bill Brown, in conversations and notes, for Brown to fashion a book.

But just barely. What we have here is a badly written string of anecdotes about the FBI and Hoover, interspersed with Sullivan's observations that most of what he saw Hoover do was evil. Unfortunately, although Sullivan understood all too clearly the madness swirling about him at the FBI, he was one of the thousands who wouldn't speak out at the time it was happening. Even though he eventually stood up to Hoover and told him that much of what he was doing was wrong, and even though that cost him his job, Sullivan still couldn't bring himself to go public. If he had done so in the 1960s, when his doubts about the FBI became convictions, he could have made an enormous difference in the way the public thought about Hoover and his agency while the abuses were still going on. As it is, a book as thin as this published in 1979 seems a case of too little, too late.

—*Joseph Nocera*

Charity U.S.A.: An Investigation into the Hidden World of the Multi-billion Dollar Charity Industry. Carl Bakal. Times, $15.

Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran. Kermit Roosevelt. McGraw-Hill, $12.50.

Coups and Earthquakes: Reporting the World for America. Mort Rosenblum. Harper & Row, $10.95.

Great American Dreams: Portraits of the Way We Are. Robert G. Kaiser, Jon Lowell. Harper & Row, $12.50. (See Richard Reeves' review on page 61.)

Lonely Walk: The Life of Senator Mark Hatfield. Robert Eells, Bartell Nyberg. Christian Herald Books, $8.95.

The One and the Many. Arthur Mann. University of Chicago, $12.95. A decade ago, Andrew Greeley took a trip to Ireland to find the church in which his grandfather had been baptized. Just outside the church he encountered a parish priest who told him that many Americans had come there seeking out baptismal records of their ancestors. "These poor people," the priest

"How wisely he assessed his own times and the future which is now unfolding."

HON. POLITICIAN: MIKE MANSFIELD OF MONTANA

by Louis Baldwin

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said, "they've been in the States now for three generations and they come seeking roots. . . . Well, the least we can do is to be of some help to them. That's why I had all their baptismal records put on microfilm. It makes it a lot easier for people to find their roots."

Author Mann mentions this story as proof-positive that we are a society obsessed with our roots. Mann is concerned (and who isn't these days?) that American society has broken down into "angry, contentious, vindictive factions." Much of this he blames on the upheaval of the sixties and on the "excesses of ethnicity." However, he seems to have missed a larger point: that there is much more to the fragmentation of America than its search for roots (indeed, a more dispassionate observer might say that ethnicity is really one of the less important factors). So it seems equally clear that to reclaim our sense of national unity will take more than Mann's prescription of latching onto our common, rather than our separate, pasts. That is only part of the answer. Microfilm or not, Americans worry about a lot more these days than where their grandfathers were baptized.

—Peter Engel

Organizational America. William G. Scott, David K. Hart. Houghton Mifflin, $11.95.

The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson: Vol. VIII Ambassador to the United Nations 1961-1965. Walter Johnson, ed. Little, Brown, $25.

The Shadow Presidents: The Secret History of Chief Executives and Their Top Aides. Michael Medved. Times, $7. An uneven book that is worth reading because it tells about presidential assistants history has forgotten, including a recent one, Richard Cheney, who served quite capably as Ford's chief of staff—and who, if the Carter people had bothered to consult him, would have told them exactly why "cabinet government" wouldn't work. Instead, the man Carter's staff sent to talk to Cheney, Stephen Hess, was the very man who was urging them to try cabinet government. How could they have been so dumb? Medved has an anecdote that may help to explain:

"After a long, taped interview for this book in which he stoutly defended the staff as 'one of the finest—and cleanest—White House teams in history,' this Assistant to the President asked that the recorder be put aside and went suddenly 'off the record.' 'There is one problem with Jimmy that you should know about,' he began in a conspiratorial near-whisper. 'He likes to be smarter than the people around him. That's just his way. A lot of people here are bright and sharp, but there's nobody who's really brilliant. Maybe Brzezinski is the exception, but he's a specialist and he's not really that close to the President. As for the rest of us—we happen to be the people he feels comfortable with.'"

—Charles Peters

Who's Who in American Politics 1978-1979. Jaques Cattell Press, ed. Bowker, $52.50.

With No Apologies: The Personal and Political Memoirs of United States Senator Barry M. Goldwater. Morrow, $12.95. This is a political memoir of the most ordinary sort—a recitation of Goldwater's well-known gospel interspersed with his insights into politicians. ("I liked Hubert Humphrey. I couldn't agree with him on political questions, but I liked him.") Goldwater does, however, show occasional flashes of wit and has some genuinely interesting stories to tell.

Of Lyndon Johnson's tenure as Senate majority leader, for example, he writes: "When Johnson wanted something, he would stand face to face and put his hand on a member's shoulders. He would exploit flattery and friendship, remind you of former favors, and then if you didn't come around, he would be more explicit about what your failure to cooperate might cost your state.

"We called the friendly approach, when he just put a hand on your shoulder, the Half-Johnson. When he put his arm clear around you and thrust his face close to yours to make his threats, we called it the Full-Johnson."

Goldwater also says that when he ran for President in 1964, he met secretly with Johnson and struck a deal of sorts: they decided to lay off each other on the issues of civil rights and the Vietnam war. That their agreement effectively prevented a national debate and decision on the two major issues of the day doesn't seem to bother Goldwater. In any case, he says that he kept his part of the bargain, and so did Johnson. "Other voices raised [the issues] from time to time. . . But I don't recall a single statement from the President or the White House that could be regarded as in violation of that private agreement."

—James Lyons

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